

3 wounded in Israeli helicopter raid

AIN AL-HILWEH, Lebanon (AFP) — Israeli helicopters Sunday blasted a guerrilla base in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ain Al Hilweh in South Lebanon, wounding three civilians, Palestinian sources said. It was the first air raid on a Palestinian target in Lebanon since the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel signed their autonomy accord. The raid by four helicopters targeted a building used by the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), an opponent of the autonomy deal. The helicopters fired eight missiles, to score a direct hit on the deserted building on the edge of Ain Al Hilweh, near the port city of Sidon, an AFP photographer in the camp said. Three civilians near the building were wounded and the raid sowed panic in Ain Al Hilweh, the largest Palestinian camp in Lebanon with 80,000 residents. In Tel Aviv, an army spokesman confirmed the raid and said all the aircraft returned safely to base after destroying a base used for mounting anti-Israeli attacks. The DFLP, which in contrast to the PLO's mainstream group Fatah has refused to halt the armed struggle against Israel, carried out two attacks in October on Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon.

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Israelis shoot dead Fatah fighter

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — Israeli troops shot dead a fighter of the military wing of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) main group Fatah and wounded another in the occupied Gaza Strip Sunday, Palestinian sources said. Four Palestinian youths were also shot and wounded in the strip, they said, while the army said it had stepped up a hunt for wanted Palestinians. The two members of the Hawks armed wing of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's group Fatah fought a gunbattle with soldiers in the Khan Yunis refugee camp. The dead man, who was not immediately identified, was the 1,44th Palestinian killed by Israeli bullets since an uprising erupted in December 1987, according to an AFP toll compiled from Arab reports. Palestinian sources said 32 members or sympathisers of Fatah, had been arrested over the past few days in Khan Yunis. It was the army's largest sweep against the faction since Israel and the PLO signed the Sept. 13 accord on autonomy starting in Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho.

In the Jabalia refugee camp, soldiers opened fire at stone-throwing demonstrators, wounding four children aged between 12 and 15.

The demonstrators had gathered in front of the home of Imad Akel, the military chief of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) who was shot dead by soldiers on Wednesday.

Israeli police disclosed that four members of the Hamas armed wing, Izzeddin Al Qassem, had been arrested on Nov. 4 allegedly for planning to kidnap a soldier or Jewish settler.

Amid Hamas threats to avenge the killing of Akel, the army has launched a race against time to track down as many wanted activists as possible before Dec. 13, when the army is to start withdrawing from Gaza and Jericho.

"We are working at double speed before the withdrawal," an army spokesman told AFP. A Yediot Aharanot newspaper said 110 Palestinian activists were still on the run, most of them in Gaza.

The independent daily Haaretz reported 20 of the "dangerous" activists were in the occupied Gaza Strip and five more in the Hebron area in the West Bank.

In Amman, Faisal Hussein, senior PLO official in the occupied territories, warned Israel Sunday of further bloodshed if it delays the agreed troop pullout.

"They have to be aware of this truth... and withdraw on 13 because not abiding by this date means more losses and violence on the two sides," he said before departing for the West Bank.

Mr. Hussein said any Israeli delay would mean "they are trying to continue the suffering and losses for us and them... the wave of violence can only be stopped by Israeli withdrawal and any opposite view is futile and sterile."

Mr. Hussein was with an officer of Fatah movement, Muaz Seifuddin, 38, who was returning after 18 years to his home town of Tulkerem.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said last Thursday, after the worst violence since the peace agreement was signed in September, that Israeli might delay pulling troops from Gaza and Jericho.

Mr. Arafat said on Saturday the PLO expected Israel to stick to its pledge to pull troops out. Mr. Hussein said PLO security arrangements would be ready.

"Our readiness is total to take over the Gaza Strip and the West Bank... they would be held responsible for any delay," Mr. Hussein said.

Peace accord hinges on pullout deadline — Arafat

HELSINKI, Finland (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat said Sunday that the Middle East peace accord hinges on Israel beginning its withdrawal from Jericho and the Gaza Strip on Dec. 13.

If the Israelis do not start withdrawing troops by the target date agreed to in negotiations, "this means that there will be no implementation of the peace accord and everyone has to bear his responsibility about what will happen after that," he said.

Mr. Arafat made his comments before flying to Denmark, the last stop on a five-day Nordic tour to gain aid and investments for areas that would achieve Palestinian self-rule under the historic accord signed Sept. 13 Washington.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has said that Dec. 13 is not "a holy date" and that withdrawal of troops from around Jericho and the Gaza Strip may have to wait until a cessation of violence that broke out after the peace accord was announced.

Israeli officials Sunday played down disagreements with Palestinian negotiators over autonomy arrangements, pledging to respect the Dec. 13 deadline.

Health Minister Chaim Ramon told Israeli Radio,

"There are some difficulties, but we are negotiating to resolve them."

"The parties to the talks are tense because the Dec. 13 deadline is approaching and we have set ourselves the task of reaching an agreement by then."

Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said on Israeli Radio: "No doubt there will be a lot more mini-crisis in the talks with the PLO, but the Dec. 13 deadline remains a target."

In Cairo, Palestinian chief negotiator Nabil, Shaath said the talks would resume "in principle" in Egypt on Tuesday, but "no definite date has been fixed yet."

Dr. Shaath said the Israeli negotiating position had caused a "deep sense of crisis" among the Palestinians.

According to Mr. Arafat, Dr. Shaath accused the Israelis of "proceeding by a series of intrigues."

"We want peace, and we are not putting up with this kind of provocation," the PLO chief warned.

However, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said Palestinian officials had assured him progress was made at the last session of talks, held in Cairo and El Arish in the Sinai Peninsula last week.

Meanwhile the Israeli government was meeting to discuss the main problems stalling progress at the talks: The exact boundaries of the future autonomous district of Jericho and control of crossing points with Egypt and Jordan.

Mr. Rabin begins a three-day European tour Monday to brief European Community leaders on the progress of the talks.

Dr. Shaath made an unscheduled trip from Paris to Stockholm on Friday night to brief Mr. Arafat.

"They are insisting not to withdraw, but redeployment," Mr. Arafat said at Helsinki airport.

In spite of that I gave (Shaath) the instruction to return back to continue the discussion. I give it another chance," said Mr. Arafat.

"Patience has limits," he said.

Mr. Arafat said the PLO would hold "an important meeting" of its leadership in Tunis shortly to discuss the state of negotiations.

The PLO leader noted that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher would be in Europe this week.

Mr. Christopher plans at least two sessions with Mr. Arafat as part of a U.S. move to support the peace accord.

Iraq sceptical over chances for early lifting of sanctions

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — The speaker of the Iraqi parliament, Mohammad Mehdi Saleh, said Sunday he doubted whether the U.N. embargo on Iraq would be lifted soon, and accused Western nations of trying to prolong it.

"From a legal and moral standpoint, the embargo no longer has a reason to exist. But there are other factors intervening to make it last," Mr. Saleh told AFP, referring to the sanctions imposed after Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

"That is why we doubt the credibility of certain countries, like the United States and Britain," he added.

Iraqi and U.N. officials said Friday that Baghdad had agreed to long-term monitoring of the country's chemical, nuclear and armament programmes, removing a major obstacle to lifting the U.N. embargo on Iraqi oil sales.

In a letter to the Security Council, Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahaf agreed to the long-term monitoring and urged the council to lift the sanctions.

He voiced hope that the Security Council would respond to the Iraqi initiative by immediately implementing paragraph 22 of U.N. Resolution 687, which called for the embargo to be lifted once it was determined Iraq had honoured its agreement to destroy all weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Saleh meanwhile said the minimum six-month period required by the United Nations to test Iraq's compliance was "long and useless."

"Three years and four months for an embargo is ample. There is no point in making it drag on uselessly — that contradicts the U.N. Charter," he said.

Diplomatic sources at the U.N. said Iraq's pledge to honour its agreements may not be enough to convince the Security Council to lift the embargo in the near future.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz has been in New York since last Sunday to plead for the lifting of sanctions, and accused the United States on Saturday of blocking such a measure.

"The major obstacle (to lifting sanctions) is the position of the American administration," Mr. Aziz said in New York in a television interview.

Asked whether he thought

the United States position was a double-cross, Mr. Aziz replied, "Yes, it is."

Mr. Aziz said Saturday that U.N. inspection teams will no longer be confronted.

"Yes, I can assure you. Yes, we don't have any interest in those confrontations..." Mr. Aziz said. He was asked on Cable News Network's Evans and Novak show if Iraq will block U.N. teams searching for weapons-building technology.

Such confrontations occurred the last two years as U.N. inspectors tried to implement Resolution 715, adopted in October 1991.

Mr. Aziz spent the early part of the week privately urging Security Council members to lift the sanctions.

When asked why it took Iraq so long to accept monitoring, Mr. Aziz told CNN the confrontations "were imposed on Iraq."

"There were provocations that affected the dignity of the country, the sovereignty... and the security of the country, and we were reacting in a way to protect ourselves," he said.

He repeated Iraq's claim that there were no more

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Import licences abolished

By Samir Shafiq
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Industry and Trade Minister Bassam Al Saket announced at a press conference Sunday that licences are no longer required for the bulk of Jordan's exports and imports in line with the government's drive to liberalise the Kingdom's economic climate and facilitate business transactions for industrialists and traders.

The minister said the Council of Ministers has approved a new import and export law which would take effect upon its publishing in the official gazette soon. The new law would cancel regulations issued in 1976 and 1979 to govern import/export procedures.

Dr. Saket emphasised that the new (draft) law was only a stage in the process of reforms that many developed countries and neighbouring states have scrapped import/export licences and Jordan had to ease the measures which regulate the movement of goods.

He said that the new law was also necessitated by Jordan's



Bassam Al Saket

economic expansion, noting that in 1993 about 100,000 import/export licences were issued to some 16,000 importers/exporters compared to 36,000 licences issued to 1,000 businessmen in 1985.

The minister assured the journalists that neither the International Monetary Fund (IMF) nor the World Bank had any influence on the decision to simplify import/export procedures.

According to Dr. Saket, the new law relieves the Ministry

of Industry and Trade from collecting fees and gives the customs people the right to collect all necessary charges in a single payment upon the clearing of goods.

As such, the minister elaborated, costs which were associated with licences would be minimised and would reflect in lowering or at least in maintaining stability of prices on local and imported products.

The main features of the new law from an export perspective are:

A) Exporters are exempted from obtaining a licence for their exports of Jordanian origin on condition that the goods are not destined to countries with which Jordan has protocols or trade agreements.

Unless the protocols and agreements exempt the exports from carrying a licence, exports to these countries require certain arrangements and, as such, should have an export licence.

B) If goods need a prior clearance from a specific authority to be exported, the clearance would suffice and would be

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Abdul Salam Al Majali

Jordan's water problem is legacy of Palestinian influx — Majali

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Sunday blamed the forced migration of Palestinians into Jordan for much of the water problems the country is facing at present.

The Kingdom's water resources could have been sufficient for one and a half million people but not adequate to suffice the domestic and agricultural needs of four million citizens, Dr. Majali said in an address at the opening session of a regional symposium on water use and conservation. (See page 3)

The actual per capita water requirements in Jordan is estimated at 1,000 cubic metres but the availability is 180 cubic metres or only 15 per cent of the actual needs, Dr. Majali said.

Jordan uses 27 per cent of its water for drinking and industrial purposes, costing the country around five per cent of its overall income, the prime minister said.

Stressing that Jordan realises

the inevitability of resorting to modern technology and reorganising legislation and public administration to deal with the water problem, Dr. Majali said the Kingdom had worked out plans for this purpose and has been allocating and spending funds to deal with the problem.

He said Jordan was not alone in the region that had been suffering from imbalances in natural resources and population. Similar imbalances exist in the occupied Palestinian lands and also in Israel where the problem is less acute because the Israelis are exploiting the share of water of the Arabs in the region, he said.

Since the start of the peace process in Madrid, Jordan has focused its attention on the water issue and special working groups on water have been formed, he added.

Water sharing is among the top priorities on the Israeli-Jordanian agenda, Dr. Majali said.

The prime minister said

Jordanian-Israeli negotiations deal with the question of ensuring for each side its share of the common water resources, namely in the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers.

He said the Jordanian delegation to the Jordan-Israeli negotiations was trying to create a sub-agenda for the talks with the Israelis on water, energy and environment issues.

He said the sub-agenda "is designed to help settle Israeli-Jordanian disputes in these three matters on the one hand and exploring future regional cooperation, which can only start following the achievement of comprehensive peace."

Similarly, Dr. Majali added, a working group on water is also active in the multilateral phase of the peace process and is discussing data on water resources and water use, management of water resources, increasing water resources in

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Senate elects its officials and panels

By Suhair Obeidat
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Upper House of Parliament (Senate) Sunday elected senators Zeid Rifai, Ahmad Obeidat, Abdullah Salah and Leila Sharaf as members of its permanent office.

Former prime ministers Rifai and Obeidat were elected as first and second deputy speakers respectively, former Ambassador to the United Nations Salah was elected first assistant speaker and the position of second assistant speaker went to former Minister of Information Leila Sharaf.

There were no other nominations for these positions. The speaker is appointed by His Majesty the King.

Former prime ministers Bahjat Talhoumi and Mudar Badran and former House speaker Ahmad Tarawneh were elected as members of the Higher Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution.

The council includes Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi as president, three senators and the most senior five judges in the judicial system as members.

The council convenes to interpret articles in the constitution. It is the only body authorised to try ministers or former ministers upon the request of the Lower House.

The Senate also approved, with only minor changes in wording, its reply to the Speech from the Throne with which His Majesty opened the 12th Parliament on Nov. 23. The reply, drafted by a three-member committee comprising of Ahmad Obeidat, Kamel Sherif and Nasser Al Assad, will be presented to the King at the Royal Court today.

The Senate also elected members of its foreign affairs, judicial, finance, administrative, education and higher education and environment, social development and health committees.

Also during the session, Kamel Abu Jaber and Abdul Majeed Shoman, who did not attend the opening session on Nov. 23, were sworn in as senators.

Senators are appointed by the King and can serve as ministers.

The Constitution stipulates that members of the Senate should be chosen from among former or present prime ministers and ministers, former ambassadors among other high-ranking officials and "persons who enjoy the confidence of the people through their services to the country and the nation."

Cabinet reshuffle could come any moment now

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali yesterday continued extensive consultations with parliamentary blocs aimed at reshuffling his cabinet in preparation for seeking the Lower House of parliament vote of confidence next Sunday.

According to parliamentary sources, the prime minister Sunday met with representatives of the Progressive Democratic Front. The sources said Dr. Majali did not reveal what changes he will introduce to his cabinet's makeup.

A reshuffle expected to affect as many as 10 posts was to be announced this week with some sources saying the reshuffle could come as early as today.

The parliament, composed of three primary blocs and two smaller ones, is expected to give Dr. Majali a vote of confidence but only after what promises to be stiff questioning by the deputies of the government policies on peace and democratic values.

The majority of the members of the two larger blocs — the 18-member National Action Front (NAF) and the 22-member Progressive Democratic Front — are expected to

give the Majali cabinet a vote of confidence, sources say. The 17-member Islamic Action Front (IAF) parliamentary bloc on the other hand is expected to withhold confidence.

It was not immediately clear how the six-member Independent Bloc and the eight-member National Front and other independents will vote.

Parliamentary sources told the Jordan Times Sunday that some deputies intend to give Dr. Majali a vote of confidence but will make it a point to criticise him for using His Majesty King Hussein's Speech from the Throne as a government policy statement.

A member of the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) said that many of his coalition's members are going to criticise Dr. Majali for "hiding behind the speech from the throne" and stress that their vote "is one of confidence in His Majesty's policies and not Dr. Majali's."

At least two members of the PDF bloc, Mafraq Deputy Abdul Karim Dughmi and Amman deputy Toman Faisal, have already decided that they will not vote in favour of the cabinet, the sources say.

The NAF, generally accepted as Dr. Majali's core support group in the House, is expected to give unanimous

support to the premier.

According to IAF sources, the prime minister did not seek a meeting with the front leaders.

While the IAF maintains that its position towards the government is a "strategic" one based on the front's rejection of the Kingdom's involvement in the Middle East peace negotiations with Israel, the front's decision is also influenced by its dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the Nov. 8 elections and divisions among its ranks over this issue.

Dr. Hammam Saeed, an Amman IAF deputy, told the Jordan Times that the front "will not give confidence out of strategic considerations regarding the peace process."

Other sources within the IAF say that while the front was expected to deny Dr. Majali confidence, it was not only because of the government involvement in the peace process, something the Islamists lived with during terms of previous governments, but because "the front also needs to reassert itself as an opposition force at a time when many of its leaders are being criticised for courting the regime at the expense of its cadres."

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Parliament to begin vote of confidence debate on Sunday

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Sunday set Dec. 5 as the date to start debating a motion of confidence sought by the government of Abdul Salam Al Majali.

Dr. Majali Thursday asked for a vote of confidence from the House on the basis of Speech from the Throne with which His Majesty King Hussein opened the 12th Parliament Tuesday. The Constitution stipulates that the government seeks the confidence of the House within 30 days after Parliament convenes.

House Speaker Taher Al Masri set next Sunday as the date for beginning the debate of confidence after the House voted down a proposal by Mafraq Deputy Abdul Karim Al Dughmi to refer to the Higher Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution a dispute over whether it was unconstitutional for the government to use the Speech from the Throne as its policy statement.

Mr. Dughmi, a lawyer, argued that it was unconstitutional for the government to use the Speech from the Throne as its policy statement because it was appointed before the end of the term of the 11th Parliament.

Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputies said the government should present its own policy statement so that it is perceived to "be hiding behind the Speech from the Throne."

Other deputies argued that the government should present its own policy statement because the "norm" has been that the government which supervises the elections resigns and a new government is formed. A government formed while the House is in session is constitutionally required to submit its own policy statement.

Deputies opposed to the use of the Speech from the Throne as a policy statement also cited the unilateral government changes of the Election Law and the dissolution of the 11th Parliament as political reasons that call for a separate policy statement.

Dr. Majali cited Article 54 of the Constitution to prove that he has the right to consider the Speech from the Throne as a policy statement.

Item 3 of Article 54 of the Constitution, which was also used by Mr. Dughmi to state his case, says: "Every newly formed Council of Ministers shall, within one month of its formation, in cases where the Chamber of Deputies is in session, place before the Chamber of Deputies a statement of

policy and request a vote of confidence on the basis of the statement."

If the Chamber of Deputies is not in session at the time, or stands dissolved, the Speech from the Throne shall be considered to be a statement of its policy for the purposes of this article."

It is a "must" for the government to use the Speech from the Throne as its policy statement in light of this article and a 1991 ruling of the Higher Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution.

The council ruled in 1991 that the government of Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker had to use the Speech from the Throne as its policy statement because it was formed while the House was in recess.

The heated debate, during which Dr. Majali rejected remarks by IAF Deputy Abdul Karim Al Akaileh that the government encroached on the legislative authority when it changed the Election Law, ended when only 17 out of 73 deputies present voted in favour of Mr. Dughmi's motion.

Dr. Majali had earlier started negotiating the changes he is expected to introduce to the Cabinet with members of the various parliamentary

(Continued on page 5)

Beirut port gets ready to rise from the rubble

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon is embarking on the daunting task of renovating the port of Beirut — devastated and looted during 15 years of civil war — to revive its role as a major east Mediterranean trade hub.

The government hopes the \$140 million it will pump into upgrading the port in the next three years will make it competitive with ports in the region and ready to handle the trade boom that Middle East peace could bring.

"We want to rehabilitate Beirut port quickly, firstly for the country to revive, and secondly, in case of peace with Israel we want to have a port that has the best equipment to compete," port official Joseph Kamel told Reuters.

The programme and a \$400 million plan to update Beirut airport are key projects in the post-war reconstruction plans of the government of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri. Work on both projects is expected to begin in the first half of 1994.

Eighty per cent of Lebanon's trade passes through the port of Beirut and officials say volume will increase dramatically once it is updated.

But at present major shipping companies still avoid Beirut. They say poor equipment and an ageing workforce cause long delays. A recent U.N. study called the port completely uncompetitive.

Antoine Rayes, head of a government committee running the port, said the aim of the renovation programme was to give Beirut "one of the most important ports in the region."

"If we limit our activity to rehabilitation... we won't have done anything but modernise the port a little since 1975. But we want to regain our previous position and at the same time follow up with development," he said.

The port was stripped of most of its equipment, by militiamen who took it over during the 1975-90 civil war. The government has recovered little of the equipment and the port now rents most



Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri

of its machinery from private firms.

"We are rebuilding from zero. The militiamen took everything leaving the port a desert," said Mr. Kamel, standing amid mountains of rubble.

Rebuilding will be financed by a \$50 million European Investment Bank loan granted in November. The rest will come from port revenue which is expected to reach 100 billion Lebanese pounds (\$58 million) this year.

New mobile cranes and rails, forklifts and other handling equipment like side-loaders, trucks and trailers will be bought.

Cargo basins will be rebuilt, a new quay constructed and warehouses repaired. The port will be paved and asphalted and computerisation upgraded.

Two basins still have to be cleared of capsized ships and mines planted on the seabed by militiamen, which will allow bigger ships to enter.

Mr. Rayes said a third quay will complete Dock 4, the largest of the four docks, turning it into a main container terminal with a handling capacity of 200,000 containers yearly.

Increasing its draught to 15 metres will allow fourth generation container ships to berth there, he said.

A fifth dock able to handle twice as many containers is planned in the future. The old 35,000-square-metre free zone is a mountain



President Elias Hrawi

of rubble. Its battered building has been demolished to make way for a \$15-million free zone complex double the area on which work will begin soon.

A second free zone housing light industry is planned in the future. Officials said the port's 1,400 employees, most aged over 50, need retraining in modern port operations. They also lack the proper equipment and make do with old machinery.

But Mr. Rayes said despite this unloading speed was "exemplary" and cargo was unloaded within 24 hours.

He blamed delays in goods clearing the port of outdated regulations and manual customs checks made necessary by the lack of X-ray scanners.

Despite the port's condition, official figures show that regular cargo traffic skyrocketed to more than three million tonnes in 1991 from 182,000 in 1990.

It now stands near the pre-war level of four million tonnes and officials say demand for raw material for the government's massive \$1.8 billion, 25-year project to rebuild Beirut city centre will sharply increase cargo traffic.

Thousands of containers now line the quays — evidence that activity has already picked up.

But they stand on ground littered with a filthy cocktail of wet cement, mud and fertilizer — testimony to the depth of decay in which the port is still mired.

Clan war contained in Baidoa

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Indian troops near the central town of Baidoa halted clan fighting on Saturday that left an undetermined number of casualties, U.N. officials said.

The fighting erupted on the eve of an international donor conference in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, that is also expected to bring together rival clan leaders in an effort to settle their differences.

Inter-clan fighting broke out Friday in Waajid, about 115 kilometres north of Baidoa, according to Captain Asif Iqbal, a U.N. spokesman. He said he did not know how many people may have been killed or wounded. Indian troops stopped the battle Saturday and later took control of the town.

The fighting apparently was over the selection of clan representatives for their district council. The councils are first step in a U.N.-sponsored plan to form a transitional national government by January.

Recently, there have also been minor clashes in Baidoa, which last year recovered from a famine, complicated by civil war, that killed thousands.

"Technical" (pick-up trucks with machine guns mounted on them) when they intervened to stop the fighting.

There were no casualties during the operation carried out with the help of Indian military helicopters, Capt. Iqbal said.

In Mogadishu, a U.S. military convoy came under small arms fire from unidentified gunmen Saturday, a U.S. military spokesman said.

American troops returned fire after one humvee vehicle was hit by bullets, there were no casualties.

The shooting occurred along the 21 October road as the convoy was moving from the university compound military base to Hunter base in southern Mogadishu, Steve Rausch said.

Car thieves shot dead a Somali driver working for CNN Television Sunday, his colleagues said.

New York talks make little impact on Baghdad residents

By Jane Arraf
Reuters

BAGHDAD — "One hundred dinars," said the thin man squeezing a toy barking dog on a street jammed with impoverished Iraqis selling their clothes and shoes.

But many Iraqis who have believed over the past three years that draconian U.N. trade sanctions would be lifted any day are finally convinced their luck has run out.

Political and technical talks going on in New York between Iraq and the United Nations towards lifting the sanctions have made little impact in a country where every encouraging word was once taken as a sign that the crippling trade ban would be eased.

"Nobody believes anymore that sanctions will be lifted soon — what happens in the U.N. is just talk," said one Iraqi trying to survive on a monthly salary which has plunged in value since the 1990 Gulf crisis from \$1,500 to less than \$5.

Even Iraq's official media, fond of telling citizens that a lifting of sanctions is just around the corner, has been silent on the issue.

Official newspapers and radio made no mention at the weekend of Baghdad's agreement in New York to long-term weapons monitoring.

A key step on what still looks like a long road to lifting the embargo which has kept Iraqi oil off the market since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Despite the news, which reached the country on foreign radio broadcasts, the volatile Iraqi dinar barely budged.

The currency, usually buffeted by the slightest rumour, has hovered at record lows of about 150 to the dollar after plunging earlier this month on the black market — a far more accurate barometer of its value than the official rate of 3.2 dinars to the dollar.

One glimmer of hope many Iraqis had for an easing of economic hardship — a deal

for \$1.6 billion of supervised oil sales being negotiated with the U.N. earlier this year — has evaporated.

Baghdad seems to have decided it can live with the time it takes for a complete lifting of the oil embargo rather than agree to stop-gap measures for limited sales under strict supervision.

"Iraq wants the oil to flow again but not at any price," said one Baghdad-based European diplomat.

Gulf war ceasefire terms imposed by the U.N. after Iraqi forces were driven from Kuwait in February 1991 call for Baghdad to dismantle its most dangerous weapons systems and accept long-term monitoring before the ban on exports is lifted.

Despite the shortage of hard currency, the government this month relaxed strict rules on imports. It created an illusion of normality by allowing back into private markets goods including honey and tinned milk.

The bright lights and well-stocked shops in bustling Baghdad mask the desperation of millions of Iraqis whose salaries are worth so little that they rely on government food rations to keep starvation at bay.

They pack the pavement markets, selling used shoes and socks for pennies to those who are only slightly better off.

Diplomats say despite the currency crisis caused by the fiercest sanctions the U.N. has imposed, Iraq is keeping its ration system together through patchwork measures that can hold out indefinitely.

These include increased local food production, the quiet release of frozen Iraqi assets by some countries for food and medicine sales and complicated barter deals revolving around oil.

In one such deal, Iraq this month signed a protocol with Vietnam in which Baghdad receives rice and tea in lieu of interest payments on Iraqi oil purchases in the 1980s, diplomats said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Recorder found from plane crash in Iran

NICOSIA (R) — The flight recorder with the last words of a pilot flying a Russian-made cargo plane before it crashed in Iran was found last Thursday, the Iranian news agency IRNA said Saturday. IRNA said a team of Russian experts was looking into the cause of the crash of the Antonov AN-124 on November 15 east of Kerman in southeast Iran. Seventeen people were killed, IRNA said the recorder was sent to Tehran. A search is underway for a second recorder which taped the cockpit conversation of the crew, the agency said.

Talks on Cyprus joining EC in 1995

NICOSIA (AFP) — Talks on the question of Cyprus joining the European Community (EC) should begin no later than 1995 even if the Cyprus problem remains unresolved, EC and Cypriot officials said Saturday. In a statement quoted by the Cyprus News Agency, the EC-Cyprus joint parliamentary committee said it regretted "the continuing failure of Turkey and the regime in the occupied part of Cyprus to contribute positively" to a settlement for the divided island. "The committee insists that if such a settlement is not found in the coming year, negotiations for Cyprus accession should begin not later than 1995," the statement said, following a three-day meeting of the committee in Nicosia. Cyprus applied for full EC membership in 1990. Belgian European Affairs Minister Robert Urbain, whose country holds the EC presidency, said Friday that there was "no direct link" between the question of Cyprus' EC membership and a resolution of the Cyprus dispute. The joint committee also recommended that the EC Council of Ministers appoint an observer to the U.N.-sponsored Cyprus peace talks before the end of 1993.

Qadhafi slams West over Rushdie

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi Saturday condemned Western leaders for meeting British writer Salman Rushdie, and demanded that Mr. Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses" be destroyed. Colonel Qadhafi, quoted by the official news agency JANA, said that by receiving Mr. Rushdie and "allowing their publishing houses to publish his insolent book, the heads of Christian states are encouraging and endorsing the contents of this work which is against Islam and the Prophet." Col. Qadhafi said he was not demanding the "execution" of Mr. Rushdie, but "the execution of the book itself." U.S. President Bill Clinton met Mr. Rushdie Wednesday in Washington in a gesture of support for the novelist, who was condemned to death by Iran's late spiritual guide Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989 for allegedly blaspheming Islam in the novel. Iranian leaders have upheld the sentence, arguing it was a religious edict which cannot be changed. A religious foundation in Iran has offered a reward of \$2 million for anyone who kills Mr. Rushdie.

Claes discusses EC links with Morocco

RABAT (AFP) — A future partnership agreement between Morocco and the European Community (EC) moved a step closer Saturday after a visit by Willy Claes, current president of the Council of Ministers. Mr. Claes said after his 24-hour visit to Rabat that the EC wanted to conclude an agreement on economic and technical cooperation within the near future. The Belgian foreign minister said in a statement: "We are on the point of giving the European Commission a negotiating mandate for a four-point agreement" based on dialogue, and leading to technical, economical and financial cooperation and the eventual establishment of a free trade zone. Before his visit, Mr. Claes had stressed that Morocco should not move too quickly towards a free trade zone, as its developing industry risked losing out to outside competition. During his visit Mr. Claes met with King Hassan II as well as Foreign Affairs Minister Abdul Latif Filali and Human Rights Minister Omay Azzamane.

'Abu Nidal group plans to assassinate Mubarak'

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Several members of the hardline Palestinian group Abu Nidal have entered India and intend to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak during the group of 15 summit here next month, a newspaper said Sunday. The Pioneer, which did not identify the source for its report, said that Egyptian security authorities had been in contact with their counterparts in India concerning the alleged threat to the Egyptian leader. Government spokesmen here were not immediately available for comment. Mr. Mubarak, who has come out in support of the Palestinian autonomy accord opposed by Abu Nidal, is scheduled to arrive in New Delhi on Dec. 13 for the group of 15 meet. The Pioneer said that Indian government agencies "believe that some members of the Abu Nidal faction might have already slipped into India under aliases." It said the possibility of an assassination attempt against Mr. Mubarak had sparked "panic" among government departments responsible for the security of visiting dignitaries.

Iraq says ports back in operation

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq said Sunday its Gulf ports were fully operational and ready to accept imports of goods not banned by the U.N. embargo. "Iraqi imports will henceforth arrive directly at Iraqi ports, and that will reduce transport costs," Commerce Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh told the government daily Al Jumhuriya. The newspaper also quoted Transport Minister Ahmad Khalil as saying the waterways leading to Iraqi ports were "navigable and reliable." The Iraqi announcement came two days after the port of Umm Qasr on the Kuwait border reopened.

Turkey's Ciller reshuffles cabinet

ANKARA (R) — Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller reshuffled her cabinet Sunday, changing five ministers of her own True Path Party (DYP). Ms. Ciller, who took office in June, made no changes among ministers of her coalition government's junior partner, the Social Democrat Populist Party. Anatolian news agency reported. She replaced Rifat Saroglu with Kazim Ding as health minister and named four new ministers of state, Ali Sevkî Erek, Mehmet Ali Yilmaz, Abdul Baki Atac and Nurihan Tekinli.

DFLP leader says opposition growing against autonomy accord

By Sama Atiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A prominent Palestinian leader Sunday vowed to continue efforts to torpedo the Oslo accord in coordination with opposition factions inside and outside the framework of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) leader Nayef Hawatmeh said that opposition to the accord has gained momentum since it was ratified in Washington by the PLO and Israel on Sept. 13.

In an interview with the Jordan Times at his hotel suite, Mr. Hawatmeh also ruled out taking part in Palestinian council elections in the occupied territories scheduled for next July.

"The purpose of holding these elections is to have an executive council to implement the Rabin-Arafat agreement," Mr. Hawatmeh said. "We will not take part in such elections."

Accusing PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat of trying to avoid holding council elections and appointing people in city and town municipali-

ties in the occupied territories, Mr. Hawatmeh said: "There is still a big possibility that the elections will not take place because there is no guarantee that those who want to be rulers will win in the council elections."

The Damascus-based Palestinian leader's visit to Jordan has included a number of meetings with Jordanian and Palestinian groups to gear up pressure on the PLO leadership to drop the Gaza-Jericho agreement, and to muster support for holding a "popular Palestinian national conference" which would come out with a political programme to torpedo the Oslo accord.

In the past week, Mr. Hawatmeh discussed these efforts with Jordan's Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputies in the Lower House of Parliament, Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) representatives and members of the Palestinian Women's Federation.

The projected "united front" conference, which would result from similar smaller national conferences in the occupied territories and in countries where large Palestinian communities re-

side, would include the 10 Damascus-based opposition factions and "a majority of" Palestine National Council (PNC) members. Mr. Hawatmeh expected that a number of leaders from the mainstream Fatah faction and PLO Executive Committee members would participate, as well as prominent independent Palestinian personalities, such as Edward Sa'ad.

"The aim of the conference is to develop a political programme based on torpedoing the Gaza-Jericho agreement and to insist on a solution based on legitimate international and Palestinian resolutions," Mr. Hawatmeh explained. "This means Security Council resolutions 242, 338, 194 and 237, and to have the continuation of the intifada as a practical alternative to the Rabin-Arafat plan." The U.N. resolutions call for Israel to withdraw from the territories it occupied in 1967 and for the return or compensation of refugees from 1948.

Mr. Hawatmeh added that the conference would formulate a "collective programme that guarantees unity of the Palestinian people," and would insist on self-deter-

mination for the Palestinians, statehood and right of return for compensation.

Although he stressed that the conference must be held before July 13 when council elections are due to take place in the occupied territories, Mr. Hawatmeh said that an exact time and place have not yet been determined.

Palestinian sources expect that organisers of the conference might face difficulties in trying to find an Arab government willing to accept to host the meeting on its soil, especially when the majority of the Arab governments are involved in bilateral and multilateral negotiations with Israel.

But the left-wing opposition leader said he believed some Arab governments would allow such a national conference because they have been dealing with the Gaza-Jericho accord "in an economic manner rather than a political one."

Mr. Hawatmeh, however, denied that the conference would give birth to an alternative leadership to the PLO. He said that the conference would elect committees representing all the participants to "rebuild the PNC, to

put an end to the unilateralism of Arafat's wing, and to bring out the legitimacy borne out of popular will... which Arafat took away when he accepted the U.S.-Israeli conditions of the Madrid formula for peace talks."

Mr. Hawatmeh described the DFLP-Hamas alliance as "modest," based on "urgent and immediate political issues, and not on ideological basis."

"There are major differences in our strategic views where our programme is based on democratic solutions for conflicts, including the Middle East conflict, and Hamas' programme is against all political solutions and calls for an Islamic state on all of historic Palestine," Mr. Hawatmeh noted.

"But we put ideology aside to attend to the immediate problems... and here we meet with Hamas on the need to continue the intifada, independence, and the return of refugees," he added.

The left-wing DFLP and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) allied with Hamas to win Bfr Zeit University student council elections against the pro-Oslo accord alliance.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30 Les Aventures de L'Espace
18:00 Omnicor
18:30 Maguy
19:00 News in French
19:15 The weekly sport magazine
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 The House of Elit
21:10 The House of Elit
22:00 News in English
22:20 "The Gully"

PRAYER TIMES

06:00 Fajr
06:11 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:23 Dhuhr
14:12 Asr
16:26 Maghrib
17:57 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetiah, Tel. 810740
Assumption of God Church, Tel. 627785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624390
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terresanta Church Tel. 622266
Church of the Annunciation Tel.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

A slight rise in temperatures is expected and winds will be squally moderate. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

MIN/Max. temp.

Amman 4/15
Aqaba 12/25
Dahat 3/16
Jordan Valley 9/23

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 12, Aqaba 29 Humidity readings: Amman 45 per cent, Aqaba 40 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Mohammed Al Ghoul	790730
Dr. Jamal Al Ja'fari	796460
Dr. Youssef Naser	751144
Dr. Mohammad Amer	898983
Fine pharmacy	601912
Fordons pharmacy	778336
Al Asena pharmacy	637055
Natourah pharmacy	623672
Al Salem pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644943
Shamsi pharmacy	637660
Natourah pharmacy	623672
Najib pharmacy	847632
BRID:	
Dr. Mohammed Al Hiti	279773
Alqada pharmacy	(-)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Rajih Saqr	901280
Khalifah pharmacy	985417
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Emergency	239
Rescue	630341
Rescue Police	152, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Hospital Police	843402
Traffic Police	896320
Public Security Department	83021
Hot Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	787111
Telephone Information	(directory assistance)
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	
Repair	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	660103
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	636381
RJ Flight Information	06-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	06-53200
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Khalid Medical Centre	81381332
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn.	64428166
Alkhalid Maternity, J. Amn.	64428166
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Mallat, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Jordanian	6641714
Shamsi Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Mustashfi Hospital	66722719
The Islamic, Abdali	66617757
Al-Ahli, Abdali	6641648
Italian, Al-Muhajirah	7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafiah	77511126
Army, Madat	89161115
Queen Alia Hospital	62224050
Amal Hospital	674155
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)900560
The Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)986732
Al-Ehsa Modern Hospital	(09)999990
BRID:	
Princess Beama Hospital	(02)779355
Great Catholic Hospital	(02)772775
En Al-Nafes Hospital	(02)747700
AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(09)514111

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:30 Beirut (RJ)
11:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:00 London (RJ)
12:15 Frankfurt (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
13:00 Bahrain (RJ)
13:30 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
14:30 Dubai, Karachi (RJ)
15:00 Damascus (RJ)
15:30 Abu Dhabi Muscat (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:00 Istanbul (TA)
06:15 Marrow (RJ)
06:30 Beirut (RJ)
06:45 Cairo (RJ)
07:00 Bahrain (RJ)
07:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
07:30 Dubai (RJ)
07:45 Amsterdam (RJ)
08:00 Amsterdam (RJ)

HAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in lbs per kg.

Apple 700/800
Banana 600
Banana (Muzammas) 500
Beans 750/800
Cabbage 120/140
Carrot 260/270
Cauliflower 220/230
Clementine 200/210
Cucumbers (large) 370/380
Cucumbers (small) 200/210
Eggplant 300/310
Garlic 600/610
Grape 180/190
Lemon 120/130
Marrow (large) 250/260
Marrow (small) 400/410
Mushroom 400/410
Olives (green) 500/510
Orange 400/410
Onion (dry) 260/270
Onion (green) 220/230
Pepper (hot) 240/250
Pepper (sweet) 120/130
Potato 270/280
Tomato



Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday awards certificates to graduates of the Nursing Tutors Training Programme and the Primary Health Care (PHC) Nursing Development Programme (Petra photo)

Queen awards 29 graduates of specialised nursing programmes

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday awarded certificates to the fifth graduating class of the Nursing Tutors Training Programme, as well as the third graduating class of the Primary Health Care (PHC) Nursing Development Programme.

Both programmes are offered by the Institute of Specialised Nursing Studies (ISNS) at Al Bashir Hospital.

With the increasing need for specialisation in the region, the institute was founded in 1983 by the Ministry of Health, in close cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The centre aims to train and upgrade the capabilities of nurses and midwives, in order to improve Jordan's primary healthcare system.

The Nursing Tutors Training Programme was initiated to develop and strengthen the teaching and training abilities of nurse tutors in various nursing programmes.

This specialised post-graduate programme enrolls men

and women with a nursing background from different health institutions in the region.

Similarly, the PHC specialist programme initiated in 1991, aims to prepare staff nurses and midwives to plan, manage and implement improved nursing services in the community.

In addition to the tutors and PHC programmes, the institute sponsors various short term in-service health and educational workshops, in cooperation with other health and educational institutions in Jordan.

In his welcoming speech, Minister of Health Abdul Rahim Malhas praised the efforts exerted in launching the programmes. He said that the Ministry of Health recognises the vital role of nursing and nurses in such a system, adding that an independent nursing directorate has been established by the ministry to represent this sector.

The primary function of the directorate will be to enhance

and supervise the quality of services delivered in this field, in cooperation with other institutions in Jordan and the region.

Also speaking at the ceremony was USAID Director Tom Oliver, who thanked Queen Noor for her continuing support and encouragement in initiating this project.

The USAID assistance in funding the project ended a few months ago, giving the Ministry of Health full responsibility for the institute and its programme.

During the ceremony, the Queen distributed certificates to 14 graduating students from the tutors programme and 15 graduates of the PHC specialist programme.

Queen Noor also distributed gifts to two outstanding graduates.

Receiving the Queen upon arrival were Dr. Malhas, Mr. Oliver and the director of ISNS.

Queen Noor was accompanied by Mrs. Abdul Rahim Malhas.

5-year-plan to create 224,000 jobs, reduce unemployment to 9.6% — official

AMMAN (Petra) — The government-endorsed development plan for 1993-97 entails an ambitious programme to curb unemployment and reduce the present rate to 9.6 per cent by the end of 1997, according to Hassan Shakhateh, assistant director of Economic Research Policies at the Ministry of Planning.

Dr. Shakhateh Sunday said the plan provides for investments in the economic, social and infrastructure sectors that would create 224,000 jobs and reduce the jobless rate from 15 per cent in 1993 to 9.6 per cent in 1997.

The implementation of the programme is expected to result in real growth in the gross domestic product (GDP), estimated at an average of six per cent annually, Dr. Shakhateh said.

He said that the programme is expected to raise the per capita income in Jordan from JD 714 annually to JD 851 by the end of 1997, which means removing a large number of needy families from the absolute poverty margin.

Noting that the Kingdom has been dealing with rising unemployment rates since the start of the 1980s, Dr. Shakhateh said that while the rate was estimated at 6.5

per cent in the early 1980s, it reached more than 17 per cent by the end of 1991.

Most of the unemployed, he said, are aged between 15 and 24, and 52 per cent of the job seekers are school graduates.

The Five-Year-Plan, he continued, aims at dealing with unemployment through comprehensive and sustainable development, at the medium and long term levels, said Dr. Shakhateh.

In the short term, he added, the programme aims at creating new income-generating projects that can absorb as many workers as possible, especially those in

the low-income bracket and in the less developed districts.

He emphasised that the unemployment problem is organically linked to investment policies, vocational training and production.

Part of the government plan, said Dr. Shakhateh, is improving the quality of education at the community college level and creating new specialisations at these institutions that would be linked to the labour market needs.

Likewise vocational training programmes will be improved to enable job seekers to find employment, and sur-

veys will be conducted to determine the market's needs, he added.

Referring to the work of the Civil Service Commission (CSC), Dr. Shakhateh said that it would be restructured to provide incentives to those excelling in their performance and punitive measures on those neglecting their duty.

He said the private sector will play a leading role in implementing the five-year programme and therefore the government would facilitate and simplify the process of registering and licensing private sector companies.

Majali says civil service to upgrade efficiency

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Sunday said the government is planning a major change in the Civil Service Commission (CSC) that will upgrade its efficiency.

Under the plan opportunities and incentives will be offered to skilled, efficient and creative employees, and those who abuse their position or neglect their duties will be removed from office, said the prime minister during a visit to the Jordan Investment Corporation (JIC).

Dr. Majali attended the weekly meeting of the corporation's department directors in the presence of Finance Minister Sami Gammo.

The role of the public sector is to encourage investments, provide protection to investors and prevent the exploitation of people, added Dr. Majali. The government believes in

collective rather than individual responsibility and in transforming public administration departments into tools of progress and development, not obstacles or a means for going backwards, he said.

In its drive to decentralise, the government is also determined to bring the decision-making process as close as possible to the local communities through cooperation between citizens and local departments, continued Dr. Majali.

He said local processing of administrative matters will save citizens time and efforts.

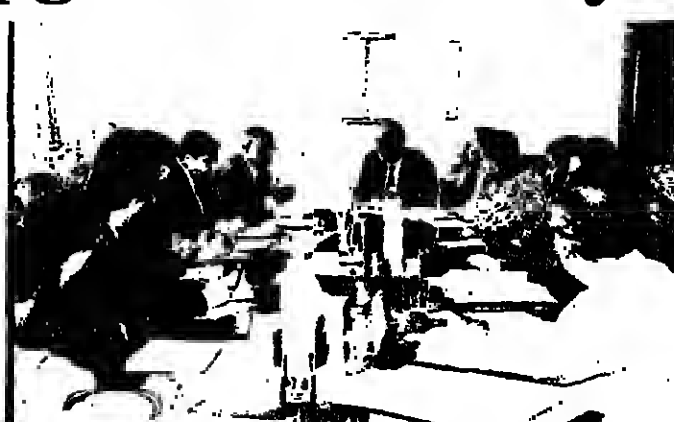
In each governorate, Dr. Majali explained the govern-

ment will appoint a special committee to recruit and appoint civil servants.

The prime minister said he hoped that the time will soon come when "we will be able to admit and speak about our errors truly without any fear, a practice that would enhance confidence among us."

At the outset of the meeting, JIC Acting Director General Mohammad Bataineh reviewed the corporation's development and its major functions.

He said JIC is entrusted with conducting feasibility studies of various new projects and assisting those that encounter difficulties.



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Sunday attends a meeting of department directors of the Jordan Investments Corporation (Petra photo)

Decision on \$35m EC aid to Jordan expected in January, say diplomats

by a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The European Community (EC) is expected to decide in January on allocating \$35 million to Jordan as financial support early next year, European diplomats said Sunday.

The diplomats said reports that the European Commission's executive arm of the 12-nation community, was poised to release the funds to Jordan soon were premature.

"We understand that a decision on allocating the funds will be taken in January 1994," said one diplomat.

The assistance which could be used to support the central budget of Jordan, is derived from a fund set up by the European Commission to help countries which are implementing economic restructuring programmes.

Jordan has already received about \$50 million from the fund to support its balance of payments.

Meanwhile, an EC press release issued in Luxembourg said an agreement signed here Saturday between the

Jordanian government and the European Investment Bank (EIB) involved 20 million European Currency Units — ECUs — (\$24 million) in an EIB loan to Jordan and not a grant.

"The EIB does not give grants," said an EC official. "It only extends soft loans under programmes agreed by the community."

The loan, signed by Planning Minister Ziad Fariz and Thomas Oursin, director of EIB operations outside the community member states, will be used to finance "renewal and expansion of Jordan's telecommunications links with its neighbouring countries and the community."

Asked whether "neighbouring countries" included Israel, a European diplomat said: "Initially it involves Jordan and Egypt as well as Syria and Saudi Arabia, and then at later stage other neighbouring countries."

Jordan has refused to agree to opening telecommunication links with Israel unless substantial progress is made in the two-year-old peace

negotiations.

Israel has unilaterally opened telephone links with a majority of Arab countries, including Jordan, but the arrangement has not been accepted by most countries.

Qatar said early this month that it had opened telephone links with Israel. Morocco and Tunisia also accepted the Israeli move after the signing of the Sept. 13 Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreement on interim Palestinian autonomy.

In the meantime, experts said the EC assistance comes timely for Jordan, whose telecommunications network is under severe pressure, stemming from high demand.

The EC press release said: "Jordan's international telecommunications service, currently reaching the saturation point, is experiencing strong growth in demand for connections with Europe and the Gulf states, which existing installations transmitting via Intersat and Arabsat satellites can no longer adequately meet."

"The works being funded under this project are de-

signed to boost considerably the capacity, flexibility and reliability of the service by means of international switching facilities," it said.

The project involves the establishment of a new international exchange in Amman and of optical fibre link inter-exchange links, construction of a new Intersat satellite digital ground station and installation of new terrestrial links using optical fibre cables with Syria, and from there to Europe via a trans-Mediterranean optical fibre cable, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The work is being carried out in stages by the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC).

The switching and satellite ground stations are expected to be completed by the end of 1994 and the optical fibre links by the end of 1995.

According to the EC press statement, the project is part of a major modernisation programme which envisages doubling the network capacity in Jordan in the next five years.

Water management is facing serious problems — experts

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — More than half of Jordan production of water for domestic purposes go unaccounted for, posing one of the serious problems facing water management in the Kingdom, according to a working paper submitted to a symposium which opened here Sunday.

The working paper, prepared by Hazim Al Naser and Ziad Bas of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, cited leakage, illegal use, unmetered deliveries and metering and human error as the main causes of what it termed as unaccounted-for water (UFW).

The paper, which said the views expressed therein "do not necessarily reflect those of... the Ministry of Water and Irrigation," said UFW was 54 per cent in Amman and 78 per cent in the Jordanian governorates alone — the 30 per cent unaccounted for 54 per cent of municipal water use in Amman — while in Mafraq it was as high as 78 per cent.

Leakage and illegal use account for 35 per cent of UFW, the paper said, suggesting replacement of old and damaged pipelines and rectifying metering errors and

checking illegal use — unauthorised tapping into pipelines in the rural areas as well as gardening and livestock watering — as possible means to achieve optimum use of municipal water in the Kingdom.

The symposium is expected to serve as a forum for the Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa as well as Iran to hear of each other's experiences in water management with a view to coming up with a set of recommendations aimed at optimising the use of water, which is seen as one of the basic roots of conflict in the mostly desert Middle East.

The five-day symposium, which has adopted as its themes "water utilisation and efficiency," "water resources planning and development," and "regional cooperation and coordination," will also hear international experts presenting their global views on water use and conservation.

Organised by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the World Health Organisation (WHO) — the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the government of Jordan, the meeting heard the experience of Jordan, Egypt, Bahrain and Lebanon in trying to optimise the use of water in Sunday's afternoon session.

Water and Irrigation Bassam Kakish paid tribute to the ESCWA initiative for organising the forum "as a genuine and realistic translation of what we all look forward to in using all possible means to conserve water resources through efficient use."

The recommendations of the symposium, he said, will serve as a base for integration and thinking among water policy-makers in the ESCWA region.

ESCWA Secretary-General Sabah Bakjaji, in his opening comments, noted that realisation of the scarcity of water resources should bring about increased cooperation among the countries of the region as the only means to address the problem.

"The joint exploitation of underground water and the reaching of acceptable and equitable formulas for sharing surface water resources among the countries of the region are issues that should be given special attention," said Dr. Bakjaji.

The purpose of the meeting, he said, is to "enable the participants to address directly the problems from which the countries of the region individually and collectively suffer as a result of scarce water resources and the inability to manage these resources in the service of the goals of economic and social development."

Mohammad Haitham Al Khayyat, deputy regional director

of WHO (Eastern Mediterranean region), said water was becoming "a constraining factor in agricultural and industrial development in some countries."

"The world situation is becoming more grim," said Dr. Khayyat, adding that statistics indicated an increase of 36 per cent in demand for drinking water in the next two decades "just to meet the demands of the growing population."

The country study paper on Jordan prepared by Mr. Naser and Mr. Elias presented a detailed review of the various sources of water for Jordan and how the Kingdom was coping with the growing demand from all sectors of consumption.

"Water demand exceeds supply and the gap between demand and supply is widening," said the paper. "This is actually related to the scarcity of water resources and increasing demands."

It noted that in 1992 Israel started controlling releases of water from Lake Tiberias for use in the Nagab Desert, adversely affecting both the quantity and quality of Jordan River water and further exacerbating the water supply and demand situation in Jordan.

The paper, which also detailed waste-water treatment, said the year 1992, when the country had unusual rainfalls, should not be taken as an annual parameter to judge the availability of water to the Kingdom.

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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Enough is enough

IT SEEMS that no matter what Iraq agrees to do to meet its obligations under U.N. Security Council resolutions that called for the scrapping of its mass-destruction weapons and a continued supervision, monitoring and verification of its nuclear, chemical, biological and ballistic weapons, the international body is still intent in prolonging the suffering of the Iraqi people. Accordingly, when Baghdad officially agreed Friday to long-term monitoring of its commitments under Security Council Resolution 715, the immediate response of the council members was that that was not enough and that Iraq must still pass through a probation period of at least six months.

To begin with, neither the letter nor the spirit of the relevant U.N. resolutions insists on putting the Iraqi authorities under surveillance after they fully agree to comply with the international demands. This prolongation of the Iraqi people's agony suggests, therefore, that the major players in the Security Council have other aims and objectives than that country's compliance with the council's resolution.

It has been already three years since sanctions were imposed on Baghdad in the aftermath of the Gulf war. The suffering of the Iraqi people has reached inhuman proportions, judging by confirmed reports that Iraqis are selling their body organs in order to make ends meet. Medical sources in Iraq and Jordan have repeatedly confirmed that Iraqis are lately selling their kidneys to raise cash to support their families. We wonder, what else the Iraqi people should sell before the international body lifts the sanctions enforced on them. The specialised U.N. agencies speak of a dramatic rise in infant mortality rate in that country due to these sanctions and embargoes. Yet, the organisation charged with the mandate of maintaining international and regional peace and security remains indifferent to such deprivations and suffering.

The Security Council has recently assumed the role of promoting and protecting human rights under the umbrella of the new world order. We therefore wonder what the council is doing in this regard. Iraq has already paid dearly for the blunder it had committed in 1990 when it invaded and occupied Kuwait. It is high time that Iraq's cooperation with the international community be reciprocated in kind.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL DUSTOUR Arabic daily Sunday accused Israel of trying to sabotage the peace process through its continued atrocities against the Palestinians. The repression, the killing of Palestinian youth and the continued siege imposed by the Israeli authorities are not only provoking the local population into escalating their intifada but also giving a clear indication that the Israelis are intent on killing all opportunities for a peaceful settlement, said the paper. It was hoped, added the paper, that the imminent date for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and Jericho would encourage the Israelis to ease their repression and pave the way for the historic moment, but the continued repression, in its ugliest form, is killing all chances for peace and stability. It seems that the government of Yitzhak Rabin is doing all in its power to appease the Jewish settlers and the extremists at the expense of peace with the Palestinians and a durable settlement that could ensure stability and security for all, added the paper. We can only raise a big question mark over the real intention of the Israeli government which signed the peace deal with the PLO in September, and ask if the Israelis are really oriented towards peace with the Arabs, continued the daily. If the Israelis are committed to the PLO-Israeli deal of Sept. 13, said the paper, the atrocities must cease, otherwise, it said, everything would go back to square one as if no negotiations had ever happened and no deals reached on peace.

SAWT AL SHAAB daily hailed the 1994 fiscal budget as another successful achievement by the government, noting that the budget is a clear indication of the sound economic policies adopted by the successive governments. The paper said that the government's decision to give incentives to the excellent employees was an encouraging step while its determination to curb unemployment reflected the government's concern over domestic affairs. The paper pointed out that the government was concerned with the external debts and has announced arrangements for signing a deal on rescheduling the debts due to the commercial creditors. The paper praised the government for seeking to reduce current expenses and for taking measures that would make Jordan independent of foreign loans. Noting that the budget envisaged locations on a governorate-by-governorate basis, the paper said that this move was aimed at advancing the government's policy of decentralisation and achieving optimum benefits for the citizens of Jordan. On the whole, added the paper, the 1994 fiscal budget reflected the fact that the national economy was strong and progressing in the right direction, and that every effort was being exerted towards achieving further prosperity.

PLO-Israeli accord needs expert help, for implementation at least

By Pascal B. Karmy

THERE ARE great expectations among Palestinians and Jordanians about the results which may ensue from the PLO-Israeli accord of Sept. 13, 1993. Those expectations reflect upon the political and economic life of the people. So far, no palpable results have ensued from the accord, whether on the political or economic plane, thus leaving the people at a loss as to what to do especially with regard to work and investment, be it in Jordan or in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israel is delaying action often and putting obstacles in the path of the implementation of the accord. Israel is taking and presumably will continue to take advantage of the ambiguous articles or expressions that are provided in the accord. One striking example, which is currently under discussions between the PLO and Israeli representatives, is about the name of Jericho. The discussion revolves around whether Jericho includes only the town of Jericho itself or whether it includes Jericho district or what else.

In this connection, one wonders whether the Palestinian team who negotiated the PLO-Israeli accord had from the very outset the benefit of advice from a capable international legal personality, well versed in the English language, who would have certainly helped the Palestinian team in the drafting of the accord. As is well known in legal circles, legal drafting is an art by itself and is acquired not only by legal or law study but especially by long experience in practising it. It transpired however that an Egyptian legal expert was called to assist in the stage of the negotiations, when the die was almost cast.

However, now the main job of the Palestinian negotiators is to endeavour very hard to make the best of the present accord and to improve upon it, in its imple-

mentation, as far as possible. It will not be surprising therefore if Palestinian negotiators engage in political wrangling and bitter altercations with the crafty Israeli negotiators, it is only hoped that Palestinian negotiators will stand firm in upholding the rights of the Palestinians in part of their homeland, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

President Arafat must have realised by now that he is no longer a guerrilla fighter but a politician, acting as head of the embryonic Palestine state. The PLO revolution should be steadily and firmly transformed into a state in the proper sense of the term. To achieve this transformation, the PLO house must be put in order.

With all respect let me

submit the following: First, the chairman of the PLO must pay more attention to this gradual transformation and stop travelling from one country to another when travelling bears no fruit diplomatically or financially. It will be a waste of time and money. Cosmetic appearances are no longer necessary and more attention should be directed to the solution of problems which may face the Palestinians.

Second, the chairman must see to it that competent, honest and reliable persons are appointed in responsible posts, that is to say the right person must be put in the right place. The above qualifications should take precedence over any other considerations. The appointments

must be non-partisan. Favouritism and nepotism, which are prevalent in most of the Arab states, must not play any role in the development of the Palestine national authority.

Third, the monies pledged by the international organisations, such as the World Bank, and by the donor states, which amount to about \$2.5 billion, to help build the Palestine economy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, must be properly handled and not squandered. It is expected however that the contributions will be dealt with by the new Palestine Emergency Development Reconstruction Authority, but must be spent under the supervision of the World Bank or any consortium of

banks or reputable financial institutions.

This will give confidence to international investors and encourage donor states to contribute more to the Palestinian authority as the rebuilding of the infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will require more money than the amount already pledged by the donor states. According to Palestinian financial experts, the creation and the development of the national economy will require about \$12 billion.

Paraphrasing an American writer, "PLO leadership must be more keenly aware than ever that it is money not talk that is likely to spell success or failure when the PLO takes over the reins of

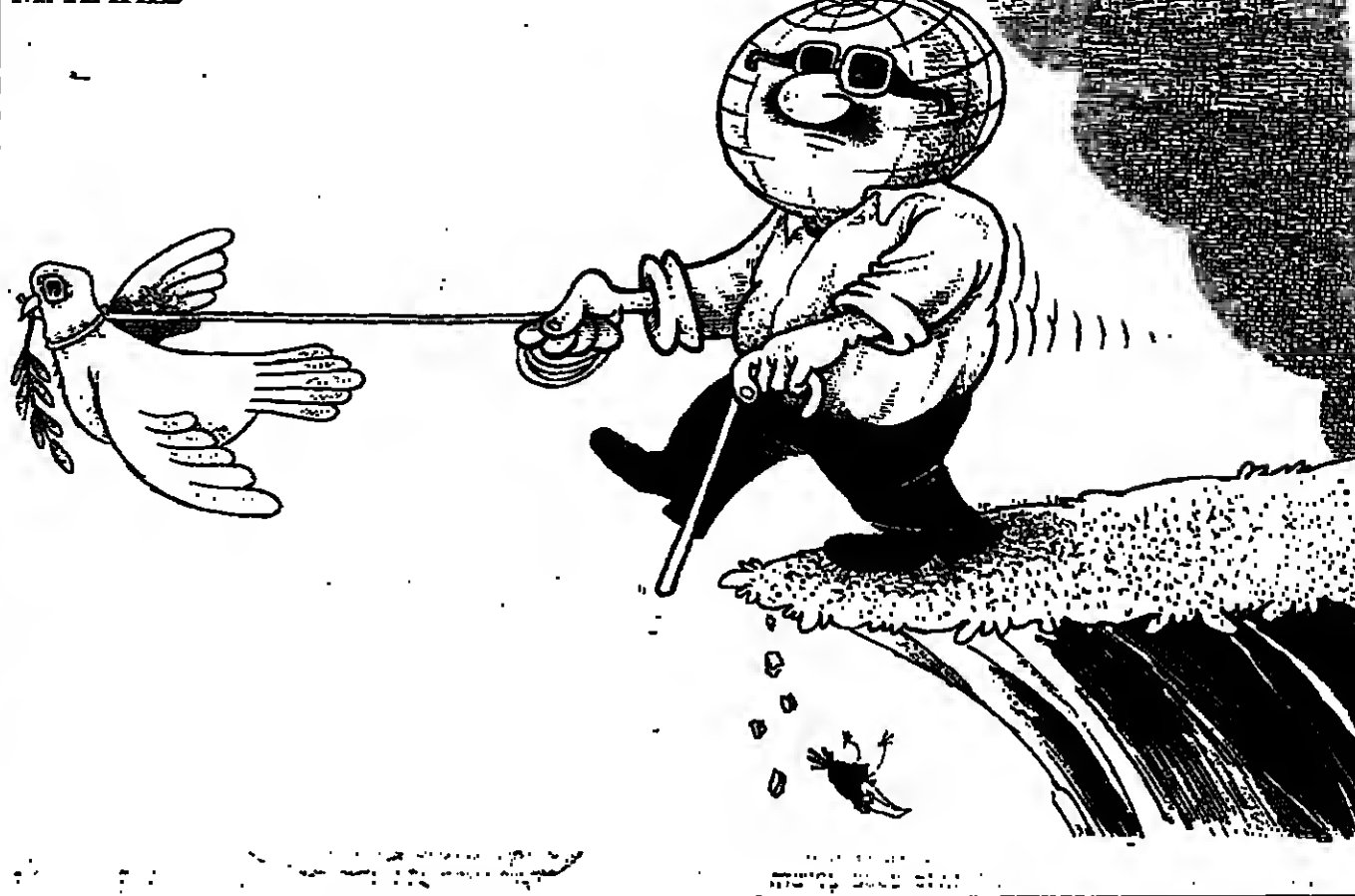
government. For the PLO, a working economy is crucial to its hopes of turning the dream of autonomy into the dream of Palestine statehood." Money and efficient organisation of government are the mainstays of success. Money should not be spent at random to please particular persons, otherwise in Palestine self-government all face bankruptcy sooner rather than later. For this purpose a proper audit authority or department must be established to control and examine the accounts.

Fourth, the PLO chairman cannot and should not be the sole authority to run the nuclear government. The role of person in charge should be discarded and democratic principles must be adopted. Consequently, in the interim period, pending on the holding of political elections in July next year, as stipulated in the accord, authority during the self-government must be delegated to a body or bodies whose members must be selected from all sides of Palestinian parties, taking into consideration the required qualifications and expertise. However, Palestinian leaders must avoid clashes between aspirants for posts in the Palestine self-government.

Finally, during the development of the Palestine self-government, it is advisable to consult Palestinian and Jordanian pressors qualified in his/her field of work, many of whom are teaching in Jordanian, Palestinian, European and U.S. universities. The chairman of the PLO must not confine himself to his own coterie of advisors.

Palestinians are the course of rebuilding their mini-state. Thus, the eyes of the world are turned towards them to see how they act and behave. Palestinians must therefore rise to the challenge of reconstructing this state almost from scratch and measure up to the high standard of behaviour an international respectability.

M. KAHIL



Close monitoring of human rights violations is a requirement of democracy

By Waleed Sadi

Criminal justice in the context of human rights attracted attention during the last week at both the national and international level. Here at home, the execution of one woman and two men on Nov. 18, after they were convicted of first degree murder, caused consternation among some Jordanians and prompted Amnesty International (AI) to express "deep concern" over what it viewed as a steep rise in the number of executions in Jordan.

The Jordanian opposition, faint as it was, to last week's executions stemmed from two principal concerns. One is the belief that capital punishment per se should be phased out even for the most serious crimes, if not totally abolished. The other anxiety is the alleged discrimination between men and women when it comes to so-called crimes of "passion or honour." AI reiterated its long held view that the death penalty is "a violation of the right to life and of the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment," as specified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the legally binding human rights instruments that were codified on its basis. In this vein, AI pointed out that 12 executions were already carried out in the Kingdom in the course of 1993 alone.

Human Rights File

AI rejects altogether the death penalty even for the most serious crimes. This particular issue was the subject of a considerable debate and deliberations at last June's Vienna World Conference on Human Rights. AI played a pivotal role in raising the subject and was supported by some western and Latin American countries. The effort to adopt a policy guideline against the application of the death penalty was effectively aborted when the greater majority of the participating states refused outright such an adoption. Nevertheless, AI continued its struggle against capital punishment, not on the basis of international consensus but on its own strong conviction that the carrying out of the death penalty entails cruel and inhuman treatment that human rights instruments condemn.

Thus, the international campaign against capital punishment continues unabated, in spite of its rejection by most countries and societies, because there are people, governments and organisations that regard it as a violation of the right to life. Unfortunately, however, there appears to be less of a regard to the right to life of victims of murder than to the right to life of murderers on the premise that states are or should be more "civilised" than criminals and therefore may not deliberately take the life of persons even though they had committed the gravest crimes.

Human rights activists are nevertheless bound by what is codified on the subject till the various human rights treaties are amended. The most pertinent principle on the death penalty is found in Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which, unfortunately, is little remembered by AI or those of us who would rather see the death penalty completely outlawed. Paragraph 1 of that article reads as follows: "Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life." Abolitionists interpret this part as applying to the perpetrators of the crime of first degree murder but not to their victims, as if victims had no inherent right to life that must be protected by law and not be arbitrarily deprived by others. Some of the crimes against innocent people are so outrageous and inhuman that they shock both the proponents and opponents of the abolition of capital punishment. The murdered people's right to life must never, therefore, escape our concern and attention.

Still, the ICCPR, which is the singularly most important human rights treaty on civil and political rights that humanity

has ever devised, has more to say on the subject in the second paragraph of Article 6. "In countries which have not abolished the death penalty," this second paragraph stipulates, "sentence of death may be imposed for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime and not contrary to the provisions of the present Covenant and to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide."

This has been repeatedly interpreted by the Human Rights Committee (HRC) which monitors the application of the ICCPR internationally as allowing the death penalty for the gravest of crimes while encouraging its phasing out. If we were to be faithful to the ICCPR as a legally binding treaty on all states that ratified it, I am afraid we cannot adopt the AI view that capital punishment is per se a denial of the right to life or that its application is per se a cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. If the Vienna World Conference could not change the rules on the death penalty, then the most that the international community can say about the subject is that the world is not yet ready to abolish the death sentence altogether.

What remains is the Jordanian concern that whereas men seem to murder women in the name of honour and passion and escape literally scot free, women do not appear to enjoy similar treatment when their spouses either flout their honour or subject them to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

"Unfortunately, there appears to be less of a regard to the right to life of victims of murder than to the right to life of murderers on the premise that states are or should be more 'civilised' than criminals."

This is a dimension that calls for closer scrutiny. Not enough was published about the executed woman to establish, one way or another, whether there were sufficient circumstances to warrant the commutation of her penalty. Specifically speaking, whether the condemned woman was actually driven by fear for her life and murdered her husband as some kind of self-defence deserved close attention. Of course, even in such a situation she cannot be expected to escape punishment, but the peculiarities and circumstances of her case may have called for the commutation of her death punishment.

I must presume that her defence lawyer pleaded such a line of defence and that the court that convicted her acted on such a defence but found it wanting. As long as we have faith and confidence in our judicial system, and are not really privy to the records, we cannot challenge the legality of her conviction from afar.

Jordan has an effective appeal system and all persons condemned to death may resort to it. Nevertheless, there will come a time when the country may create the post of ombudsman for the purpose of keeping a closer look on the administration of justice and respect for human rights.

The principle behind the establishment of such a function is already widespread across the democratic world and fully operational in most of them. Jordan cannot be expected to stay behind in such a scheme for much longer.

The writer is a veteran human rights activist on the international level. He was a member of the U.N. commission on Human Rights, the main and central international organ on human rights, and its chairman in 1980. Mr. Sadi also served as member and vice chairman of the U.N. Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities. Currently he is on the board of the 18 member tribunal that monitors the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and interprets the meaning of its provisions.

LETTERS

Doctoring one's behaviour

To the Editor:

I read the piece on the cancellation of the TV. programme on modes of conduct in our society.

JMA asks psychiatrists to cancel successful T.V. programme (Jordan Times, Nov. 23, 1993).

It was shocking to know that the Jordanian Medical Association (JMA) was behind the cancellation for its poor reasons listed.

Dr. Sarhan, who took the initiative to make the programme and prepare for it, deserves a lot of credit and, in my opinion, has the right to voice his views and benefit from the publicity (although he already recorded the first 13 shows of each charge).

If the JMA disagrees with the soundness of his medical advice, which is the only objection, I can accept from them, they should have found more constructive ways to respond, rather than to silence his voice.

The JMA should have considered sponsoring another TV. programme to present another point of view, and would suggest a name like "other modes of conduct" to stress their point. I am sure that our TV. viewers can handle better quality TV. programme like the one the JMA forced to cancel.

Let the JMA know that their logic in the handling of this issue is at least questionable. The cancellation deprive many people of their only access to medical advice in this sensitive medical field. By cancelling the show, the JMA prove only one thing: that as a member, any doctor is entitled to bony a name and a number in the JMA books.

If the JMA questions the medical advice of this doctor, what action do they intend to take beside this? I guess Dr. Sarhan is still taking care of his patients in his clinic. Are they planning to monitor his private practice? What are they doing about the many less qualified medical professionals who are caring thousands of patients in privacy every day?

I am sure our employed and many unemployed doctors have more pressing concerns and higher expectations of the JMA. And if they lack the knowledge of more important problems in the medical field, I suggest they rely on our newspapers to know more about the shortage of medical supplies in public health facilities; and that most patients in these facilities get less than five minutes of consultation with their doctors who are prepared to see in many cases upon \$0.60 or even \$0.80 patients in an eight hour shift; and many more problems.

I guess the JMA should reconsider their position on this issue. I wish they can accept different points of view and allow their members and the public freedom of expression.

It is time for our so called professional associations, like the JMA, to focus on more important issues beyond collecting dues and issuing flashy ID cards and fancy car stickers. These organisations seem to live in another era; unless they range soon to do a better job in serving the public and the thousands of members (who are forced to be members to allow to practice), or hastily change their mode of conduct, the risk losing the thin thread that keeps them attached to our changing needs.

Emile Khail,
P.O. Box 599,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

هكذا صنع القتل

Pakistan's nuclear programme to be used for 'peaceful purposes only'

Relations with Jordan are one of the top priorities

THE GOVERNMENT of Benazir Bhutto is determined to deepen and strengthen relations with Jordan and the Arab World, after a period in which the former administration of Nawaz Sharif followed Pakistan's foreign policy to drift. This was stated by the new Pakistani foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ali, in an interview with George Hawawneh in Islamabad on Thursday.

"I will personally do everything I can to deepen and strengthen our brotherly relations with Jordan, and the rest of the Arab World," said Mr. Ali, who earlier this month replaced Mr. Farouq Leghari as foreign minister, after the latter was elected president of Pakistan.

"There has been no cooling off in our historically solid and brotherly relations with Jordan. It is just that the former government allowed the whole foreign policy of Pakistan to drift," the foreign minister said.

"We are just beginning to pick up the threads, and relations with Jordan will be one of the top priorities," he added. "The prime minister and I will be visiting the region soon, and I expect improvement in relations on all levels — economic, trade, technological exchange, sports and all."

Following is the text of the interview in a question-and-answer format:

Question: It seems that India is willing to engage Pakistan in a dialogue towards the resolution of the Kashmir problem. Given the record of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in thrashing out the Simla accord in the 70s with India against all odds, do you believe that the decision by the governments of India and Pakistan to resume bilateral talks at the foreign secretary level in accordance with the Simla agreement would promote a purposeful and meaningful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute?

A: Pakistan and India had agreed in the Simla agreement of July 1972 to discuss further the modalities and arrangements for the establishment of durable peace and normalisation of relations. These included, inter alia, a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir. However, since the signing of the Simla agreement India

had refused to negotiate the status of Jammu and Kashmir saying it was an integral part of its sovereign territories. The situation in Kashmir since early 1990 and the gross violations of human rights committed by the Indian forces have highlighted the inescapable reality that unless this core issue is addressed meaningfully, it would be impossible for the South Asian region to have durable peace and stability. We hope that the Indian government would ease repression in the state and agree to evolving a just and lasting negotiated settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

Q: What were the reasons that compelled you to withhold the tabling of a resolution on the human rights situation in the Jammu and Kashmir region at the U.N. General Assembly?

A: As you very well know, the gross violations of human rights in the Indian-held Kashmir has been a matter of grave concern to us and of increasing concern for the whole international community. Pakistan has been actively consulting with the member states to the U.N. with a view to introducing a resolution on the human rights situation in Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir at the current session of the U.N. General Assembly. A large number of friendly and Islamic countries had agreed to support the resolution.

However, a number of friendly countries urged us to avail the Indian offer of bilateral talks. These friends also advised the Indian government to agree to a comprehensive and purposeful dialogue with Pakistan to settle the core issue of Kashmir which has embittered relations between our two neighbourly countries and represents a serious threat to regional and international peace and security.

After having consulted these countries and in view of clarifications received from the government of India, the government has accepted the Indian offer of bilateral talks including substantive discussions concerning a solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute at the foreign secretary level. We have taken this decision in good faith and in the interest of the peace and for the improvement of the human rights situation. We have, thus, decided to hold

back our resolution. We expect our friends to closely monitor the human rights in Indian-held Kashmir and persuade India to ameliorate the human rights situation in Kashmir and allow international humanitarian relief and human rights organisations to visit the area.

Q: In view of the fact that your country had a marked absence of democracy for several decades after its establishment and that this situation has had its negative repercussions on economic developments, how do you view your priorities and concerns of your people over living standards and cost of living?

A: One of the primary objectives of the government is to enhance substantially the socio-economic well-being of the people as envisioned for an Islamic welfare state. The main thrust will be on improving the quality of life. This we intend to attain by raising the per capita income through an annual average GDP growth of seven per cent coupled with efforts to restrain population growth.

The government will also endeavour to:

— Encourage broader participation of all people in the development process and a more equitable sharing of the benefits;

— Generate additional employment opportunities by expanding productive avenues through private initiative as well as government policies and programmes;

— Alleviate poverty through an integrated approach of income generation, well dispersed access to social and community services, human resources development, extension of physical infrastructure, population welfare and special programmes for targeted groups and areas;

— Ensure greater self-reliance, in particular in food;

— Energy, defence production, public finance and external balance;

— Conserve natural resources and ensure protection to the environment;

— Promote good governance in state as well as public affairs; and

— Ensure macroeconomic stability and discipline.

Q: Pakistan is holding out against setting up ties or contacts with Israel at a time the long-time Arab enemies of the Jewish state are moving towards relations with it. What is the rationale behind

this position? What are the parameters that guide your country and government vis-a-vis relations with Israel?

A: Pakistan has not devised any immediate plans for recognition of Israel. We feel that it is not in the general interest of the Islamic countries to recognise Israel unless there is substantial progress on the implementation of the PLO-Israel accords and on the issue of Jerusalem.

The PLO-Israel agreement and the mutual recognition between the two sides, does not mean that a final settlement has been reached. We have welcomed these accords as a first step towards a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement. We believe that there is need to address all the issues that are of international concern, particularly the status of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements and the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. A final settlement, we hope, would conform to international obligations on these issues.

As chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Pakistan is consulting with other members of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) on this issue. We will await developments and keep the situation under review.

Q: Pakistan supported the Afghan resistance throughout the 80s, and now it seems that the Afghan factions themselves are unable to work out a modus vivendi among themselves. In view of Pakistan's involvement with the Afghan cause, do you believe that you could contribute to resolving the differences of the Afghan factions?

A: Pakistan has an abiding interest in peace and stability in Afghanistan. While adhering to the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference and mutual benefit, we would do everything within our means to promote conciliation and consensus among Afghans and help them in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of their country.

Q: Pakistan's involvement in Somalia has cost it many lives of its own soldiers, but you have not stepped up from deeper engagement. How do you envisage the course of events in Somalia and, apart from the direct military involvement, how do you view Pakistan's role as a member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in trying to settle the conflict in Somalia, a fellow OIC member.

A: Pakistan contributed its forces to Somalia in response to a request by the international community through the Security Council of the U.N. to help restore law and order in Somalia. This decision has been fully endorsed by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

Pakistan has always enjoyed close and brotherly relations with Somalia. We had assisted the Somali people in gaining independence. We supported them in the struggle against foreign aggression. We had also given generous assistance to the Somalis when their country was afflicted by drought and famine.

Our participation in the

U.N. peacekeeping operation is a manifestation of our earnest desire to assist the international community in general, and the Somalis in particular, to restore peace, stability and tranquility in that unfortunate country.

Our objective is to create conditions whereby the Somali people, currently facing the twin scourge of civil war and hunger, will be able to resume their normal lives. We are pursuing a noble mission for reestablishing peace and saving the lives of thousands of people in a fraternal Muslim country.

Pakistan supports the efforts of the regional African countries for the settlement of the Somali crisis. We fully support the implementation of the Adis Ababa accord. However, its various provisions relating to security, disarmament, political reconciliation and economic reconstruction can only be implemented if all factions join the reconciliation process being coordinated by the U.N. Pakistan is consulting with all interested governments and the U.N. in achieving the objectives of the Adis Ababa accord.

Q: Pakistan's refusal to endorse the Non-Proliferation Treaty has cost it much needed American assistance at a time when it needs all the help it could get. What are your views on nuclear arms, and how do you explain the continued nuclear activities of Pakistan against loud criticism and accusations that it is weapon-oriented at a time when the world trend is towards disarmament in the wake of the collapse of the

Soviet Union?

A: Pakistan does not oppose the NPT. We have never refused to endorse the NPT. However, as a matter of principle we cannot accept discriminatory treatment vis-a-vis our neighbour India. In fact, as early as 1979, Pakistan had proposed simultaneous adherence by India and Pakistan to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In that year we had also proposed that the two countries should simultaneously accept the IAEA Safeguards. We have also called for the establishment of a nuclear weapons free zone in South Asia and a bilateral/regional nuclear test ban. Regrettably India has taken a negative stance on all these fair and constructive proposals which are aimed at preventing nuclear proliferation in our region.

When the NPT was adopted in the U.N. General Assembly in 1968, Pakistan voted for it. We clarified then that Pakistan would sign the NPT if our neighbour India did so also. Pakistan has always been concerned about India's desire to develop nuclear weapons. These fears were realised when India exploded a nuclear device in 1974. Pakistan continues to maintain a principled position that it will accept any non-proliferation measure that is equitable and non-discriminatory between Pakistan and India. Therefore, if India signs the NPT, Pakistan will do so simultaneously.

On nuclear arms, let me state it categorically that Pakistan fully shares the view that nuclear proliferation

would be destabilising and would threaten international peace and security. This is more true after the end of the cold war and the landmark agreements between the U.S. and Russia to reduce their nuclear arsenals. Pakistan has resolutely supported international efforts aimed at achieving complete nuclear disarmament as well as non-proliferation, particularly through the establishment of equitable and non-discriminatory regional non-proliferation regimes.

Our position regarding the U.S. nuclear policy in South Asia is that the Pressler Amendment which has created difficulties in the Pak-U.S. relationship, is a discriminatory law as it applies only to Pakistan and not to India or other countries which are known to be seeking a nuclear non-proliferation as India feels no compulsion to respond to the many constructive measures we have proposed for keeping South Asia free of nuclear weapons. The criticism against Pakistan over the nuclear issue is unjustified.

We remain committed to using our nuclear programme for peaceful purposes only. While, in the development of this peaceful nuclear programme, we have acquired a certain technical capability, Pakistan has taken a firm political decision not to use this capability to produce nuclear weapons. Statements made by us reflecting this position are meant as reaffirmation of the peaceful nature of Pakistan's nuclear programme to preclude any misunderstanding.

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Japan says investment in GCC states needs time

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Japanese officials said Saturday they wanted to set up joint industrial projects with Gulf Arab states, but stressed such investments would take time to materialise.

A 20-strong Japanese delegation spent 12 days in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) discussing industrial ventures and presenting its ideas to officials and businessmen.

"We have identified some opportunities in light and medium projects that will satisfy the industries in both countries. But I am not saying the mission will bring about immediate results. It will take time to materialise," said Tetsuo Gotoh, managing director of the Japan Cooperation Centre for the Middle East.

The delegation was the largest government-sponsored Japanese mission to visit the region to discuss investment. Japan's investments in the GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE — are estimated at around \$3 billion, less than one per cent of its

total worldwide assets of \$386 billion. Most of its investments are in oil.

But GCC states want Japan and other industrial powers to invest in non-oil sectors to help them acquire technology and thereby reduce their heavy reliance on oil earnings, which provide around 90 per cent of their income.

More than 200 officials and businessmen from Japan and the GCC are due to meet in Bahrain next week to discuss economic cooperation.

"Members of the mission showed a strong desire to become future investment partners of Saudi Arabia and the UAE," Mr. Gotoh said, "but unfortunately their domestic markets are small for Japanese investment."

Osamu Mitsui, overseas coordination manager at the Japanese Mitsui Company, said they would meet with Gulf businessmen again to discuss cooperation.

"I am very impressed with the economic situation here. I think it is time for Japan to meet with people here to proceed with joint ventures in the region," he said. "We hope

something will materialise."

Most of Japan's investment in the Gulf is based in the UAE and the neutral zone shared by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. In the emirates, it has 69 companies, including three major oil firms.

GCC states have pledged to ensure stable crude supplies to Japan in return for its investment in the region. More than 60 per cent of Japan's oil imports of four million barrels per day are supplied by the GCC.

Japan is also the biggest single commercial partner of GCC states. Its exports to them stood at \$4.8 billion in the first half of 1993 and imports around \$11.9 billion.

Japanese ambassador in the UAE, Shun Watanabe, said Tokyo wanted stronger links with Gulf countries but stressed joint ventures needed effort.

"It is easy to speak about joint ventures but it is not easy to realise them. So this mission is not expected to produce immediate results, but I hope there will be results in future as both sides work together," he said.

Egypt markets oil with firms to quell price row

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has started marketing crude oil jointly with two international oil companies as a way of quelling complaints that it was overpricing oil sold to them, the oil minister has said.

Hamdi Al Banhi said in an interview the Royal Dutch Petroleum Corp subsidiary Shell Egypt and the German group Veba A.G.'s oil arm Deminex had so far taken up an offer to market crude oil jointly. He did not say to which destinations.

Oil firms have complained that Egypt does not discount its crudes enough against the

benchmark Suez blend, making it difficult to sell the 400,000 barrels per day Egypt puts onto international markets, especially in the current price slump.

Mr. Banhi also said he has met the chairman of an Israeli oil company and approved talks with an Egyptian oil company to drill for oil inside Israel, and had agreed to exchange geological maps with Israeli Energy Minister Moshe Shahal.

"When producers complained we proposed joint marketing. Then they know how much we get per barrel

and some companies are now doing this," he told Reuters, naming Shell and Deminex.

"Between the seller and buyer there is a minimum of trust. But you will never find complete agreement because of the conflict of interest," he added of the pricing complaints.

Mr. Banhi, who changed the pricing system to link it to markets shortly after becoming minister in 1991, said this year's allocation of crude oil to international firms who then export it was "very close" to last year's but he declined to give details.

He said he had agreed with Israel's Shahal, who visited Cairo last week, to the principle of a gas pipeline to the Gaza Strip and Israel and other possible ventures but they were not sure yet if it was commercially feasible.

"The pipeline price has no relation to the gas price so the project has to be feasible at a range of different (gas) prices," he said, adding that Egypt had assigned some experts to study the project.

Other projects, including Egyptian drilling in Israel, would be decided on technical or economic merit. "These

are private companies and we do not interfere. We are not pushing but at the same time we are not hindering."

Egypt has attracted a number of oil firms in the last couple of years, mostly small to medium-size independents by sweetening the terms, or concessions, determined to gather every last drop of oil out of its limited fields.

Spain's Repsol S.A., the Australian firm Copelex Resources N.L., and companies from Turkey, Croatia and elsewhere are now prospering in new areas in southern Egypt and virgin stretches of its West Nile Desert.

Lebanon hopes to reopen Beirut bourse next year

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon hopes to reopen the Beirut stock exchange, closed by shelling during the civil war in 1988, in six to eight months, a central bank official said.

Nasser Saidi, a deputy governor of the Bank of Lebanon, said reopening the Bourse de Beirut was a key element in a crash programme to revive Beirut's financial markets and attract billions of dollars from abroad for reconstruction in the next 10-15 years.

The bank's planners estimated that up to half the \$20 billion Lebanon wants to raise abroad could be attracted through investments in the stock exchange and in government and private bonds which are being developed simultaneously.

"Our plans so far call for a stock exchange within six to eight months," Mr. Saidi said.

Preparations for the exchange were "a major focus of activity" because raising equity capital would avoid the future interest burden of heavy borrowing and investors would share the investment risk in Lebanon.

"That really is what Lebanon needs at the moment. It needs investors, foreign investors, Lebanese investors to come in and take equity, to share in the risks of reconstruction," Mr. Saidi said.

Equity trading may actually start on Jan. 10, 1994, in shares of Solidere, a \$2.2 billion company being formed to rebuild Beirut's central district destroyed in the 1975-90 civil war.

Solidere's 650 million share issue launched on Nov. 2 closes on Jan. 10.

"By Jan. 10 we hope there will be a secondary market for the shares of Solidere... that would be a substantial achievement because it would set us on the road to reestablishing Beirut as a major financial centre for the Middle East," Mr. Saidi said.

Asked how the share would be traded in the absence of an exchange, he said: "That's what we're working on — 24 hours."

The future stock exchange would be semi-paperless and would eventually become fully electronic.

It would revive the Bourse de Beirut, founded in 1920 as one of the oldest exchanges in the Middle East, which listed about 40 shares when the civil war began and traded until shells badly damaged the building near the waterfront in 1988.

The old bourse actively traded 20-22 stocks as well as bonds, including bonds issued at utilities like the Port of Beirut.

Russian reform chief wants to protect industry

MOSCOW (R) — Russian reform chief Yegor Gaidar spoke out in favour of limited protection for ailing industry departing from the text of the free-market gospel which is his trademark.

Mr. Gaidar, first deputy prime minister responsible for economic reforms, told a news conference that Russia's success in propelling its centrally planned economy towards the free market had enabled it to change the priorities of its economic plan.

"In 1992, when shops were bare and goods were in short supply, we lifted import restrictions for six months," he said. Since last summer we have started reinstating these import tariffs. We believe that domestic markets should be protected and we can use these tariffs to raise some additional revenues."

He did not say which imports should be taxed. Tariffs should not be punitive ones, simply fees aimed at supporting domestic industry, he said. Russia launched its economic reform plan under Mr. Gaidar's stewardship in January last year, freeing prices, selling off state-owned industry and removing layers of state controls inherited from the old Soviet system.

Prices soared, but goods returned to the shops and Russia's once-dry streets gained

new splashes of advertising colour.

"Russia is no longer an economy plagued by shortages," Mr. Gaidar said, describing what he said were the successes of almost two years of economic reforms.

"We have reduced our military spending, the ruble is convertible for current account operations and we have a powerful public sector. The Russian economy is now an open economy, our trade balance is positive and we are building up foreign exchange reserves," he pointed out.

Russia has accompanied its economic reforms with a quest to join the world trade organisation GATT. Mr. Gaidar said membership of the organisation remained a priority, if only to guarantee Russian access to other markets.

GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, aims to remove barriers to world trade.

Mr. Gaidar's comments on protecting domestic firms seemed geared to curry favour with industrialists and workers during Russia's election campaign.

S. Korea to admit 'guest workers'

SEOUL (R) — South Korea has bowed to cries for help from struggling small manufacturers and announced it would admit 20,000 foreign workers to fill unskilled low-paid jobs that locals now shun.

A justice ministry official said the number would be limited to 20,000 and the workers would be permitted to stay for periods of up to two years.

"We will allow 20,000 foreigners to work for small companies since we realise the problems that could arise if the workers have to go," the official said by telephone.

The ministry also announced it would extend the limited amnesty for illegal guest workers for another six months.

Some 15,000 of the estimated 60,000 illegal foreign workers in South Korea registered for the six-month amnesty in June and were originally required to leave the

country by Dec. 15.

The rest are living in the shadows, working long hours by day in small factories or building sites, and changing their living quarters regularly to evade immigration department investigators.

Small business groups and provincial chambers of commerce have lobbied hard for South Korea to relax its ban on migrant labour.

The prospect of an influx of foreign workers is politically sensitive one in a racially homogeneous South Korea, which, despite a long history of foreign domination, has virtually no history of assimilating other ethnic groups.

Unions and pro-labour groups oppose importing workers, arguing it will lead to a lowering of wages for unskilled workers and may increase the present unemployment rate of around three per

cent.

But small manufacturers complain in increasingly prosperous South Korea — wages in the manufacturing sector rose 109.1 per cent between 1987 and 1992 — are turning their noses up at jobs considered "dirty, dangerous or difficult."

Many have turned to illegal migrant labourers from poorer Asian countries to fill the gap. Workers from the Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh and parts of China are flocking to South Korea in search of wages averaging 400,000-500,000 won (\$493-\$617) a month, far more than they could expect at home.

Most work in the labour-intensive dyeing, tanning and textile industries, sectors suffering from stiff competition from other, cheaper Asian producers, as well as the construction business.

Monopolies, conflicts hamper Africa mineral output

ADDIS ABABA (R) — State monopolies in the mining sector and a string of conflicts on the world's poorest continent have hit the development of Africa's mineral industry, a leading economist told African ministers.

Layashi Yaker, the U.N. under secretary-general and executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) told a meeting in Addis Ababa unrest had led to a major slump in production of minerals such as copper and cobalt.

"Since the start of the 1990s, cobalt production in Zaire slumped from around

10,000 tonnes to 6,625 tonnes because of unrest. In Liberia, during the three years of civil war annual production of iron dropped from 12 million tonnes to less than two million tonnes," Mr. Yaker told a group of mining ministers.

"Because of political disturbances and government monopolies, foreign investors are also very reluctant to intervene in the mineral sector of the continent," he added.

Africa's mineral output is important to the world's nuclear aerospace, steel, oil, precious metals and abrasives industries.

Experts say a revival of its

mining sector required a partnership between private mining firms, which can provide capital, management and technology, and host governments, which must create a conducive investment environment.

Mr. Yaker, an Algerian, called on African countries to enact "friendly legislation" which would help attract foreign capital to exploit the continent's rich mineral deposits.

Mr. Yaker said Africa was well-endowed with minerals. Excluding South Africa, sub-Saharan economies produced about five per cent of the world's mineral resources — mainly copper, diamonds,

gold, uranium and bauxite. Zaire and Zambia together produce 74 per cent of the world's cobalt and 15 per cent of its copper.

Nine other sub-Saharan economies account for more than 40 per cent of the world diamond production. Guinea in west Africa is the world's second largest bauxite producer. Sierra Leone the world's second largest producer of rutile — a form of titanium.

Mining also contributes heavily to the continent's foreign exchange revenue. Earnings from exports rose to over \$8 billion in 1988 from \$5 billion in 1980, official statistics show.

Vatican expects record budget deficit next year

VATICAN CITY (AFP) — The Vatican expects a record budget deficit of \$26 million for 1994, which will no longer be covered by the "Peter's pence" contribution. But rather by local churches. Religious orders and Catholic associations. Vatican sources have said.

That reform of the Holy See's financing was decided at a meeting of cardinals concerned with church financing, the sources said.

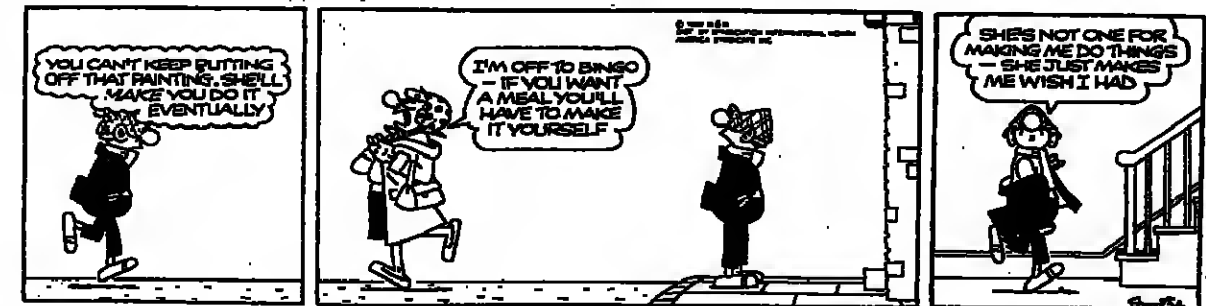
They decided that the "direct" contributions made by the world's Catholics in the form of "Peter's pence" should be used from now on for the Pope's charitable and pastoral activities — and no longer to help cover budget deficits.

The Vatican owns a large number of extremely valuable cultural treasures and other property items that bring in no income. While its capital funds have been eroded to an extent that worries church leaders.

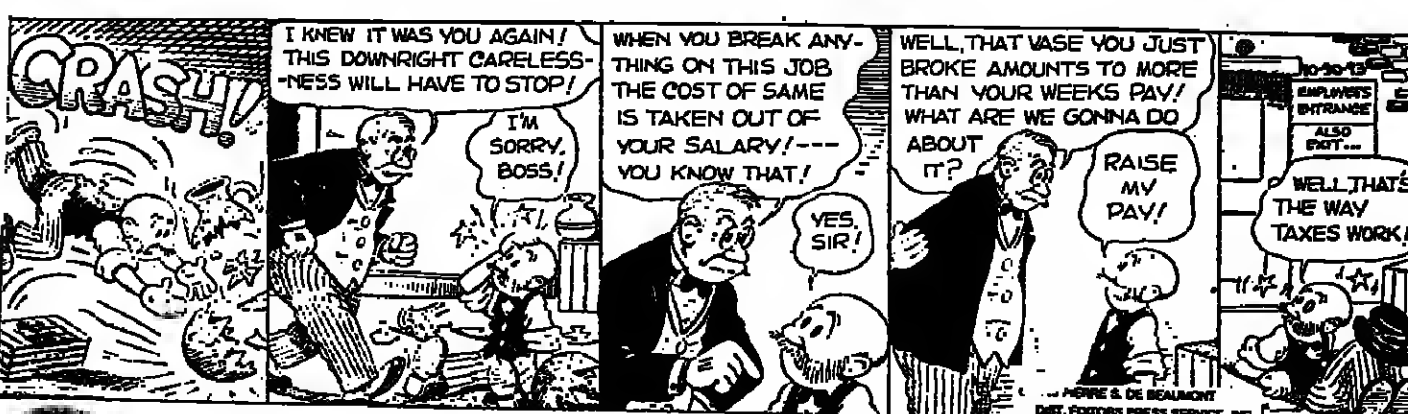
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF.

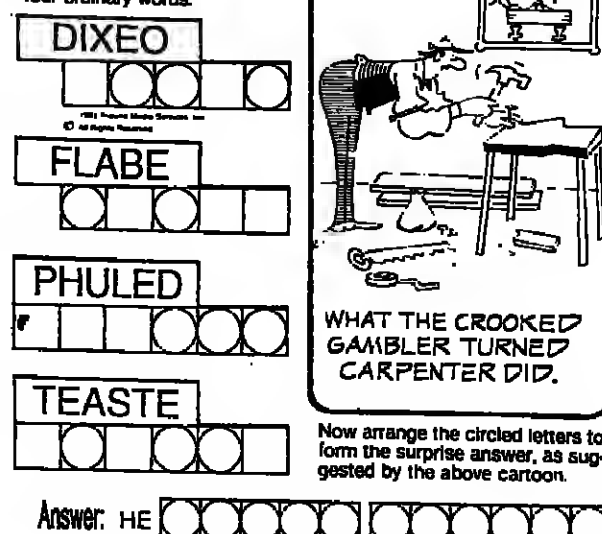
By Harris



"I've got a fun, new hobby! I'm learning how to chew gum in my gavel!"

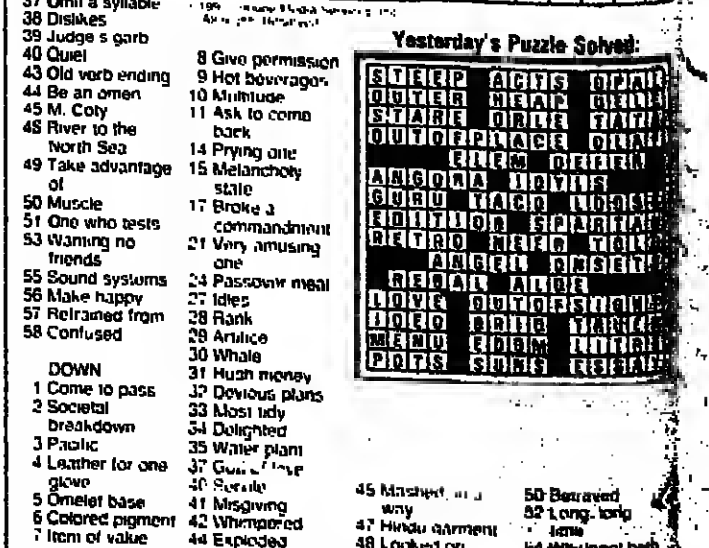
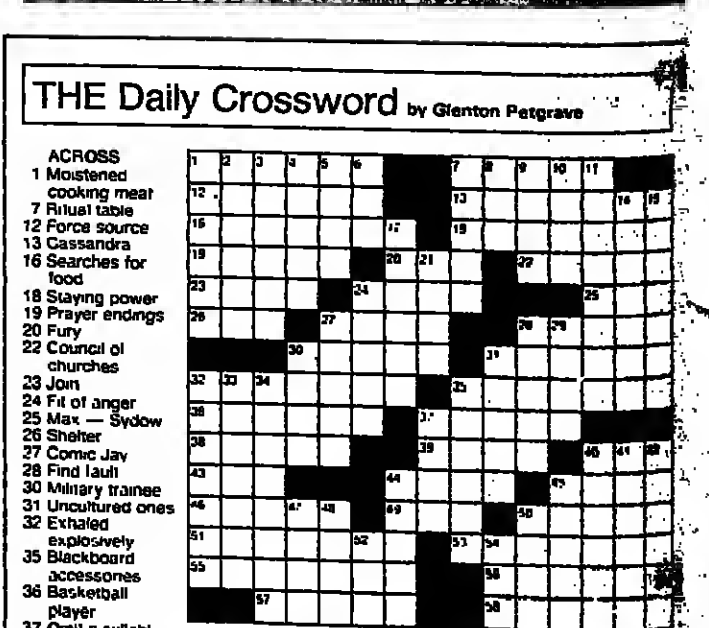
JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Yesterday's Jumbles: YIELD CIVIL STYLUS CUPFUL
Answer: What the horse called his wife — A SILLY FILLY

THE Daily Crossword by Glenton Patgrave



11

Hindu nationalists suffer in India election

NEW DELHI (R) — India's Hindu nationalist opposition suffered a serious setback Sunday to a once seemingly inexorable march to power as it headed for losses in at least two of five regional polls.

Senior members of the ruling Congress Party were jubilant as results poured out of three of the four states where Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao dismissed nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) governments last December.

"We have turned the tide against the BJP. We'll finish them off at the next elections," Deputy Foreign Minister R.L. Bhatia told Reuters.

"India has returned to its secular tradition," said Law Minister H.R. Bhardwaj.

Both said Congress was confident of winning the central state of Madhya Pradesh, which completed two-stage polls Saturday and begins counting the votes Tuesday.

Only a few weeks ago, Congress was fractious, morale was low and Mr. Rao was being widely criticised within it for an alleged lackadaisical response to the Hindu nationalist challenge. On Sunday, it was positively jaunty.

The BJP won handsomely in Delhi, which was voting for its first assembly, but elsewhere the news was gloomy for a party which shot from the political fringes to become the parliamentary opposition in less than a decade.

It appeared likely only to squeak back into power in the arid northern state of Rajasthan in a very tight race with Congress and it lost Himachal Pradesh to a Congress landslide.

Party spokesman Venkata Naidu also conceded the BJP would not win a majority in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state with 120 million people and politically its most crucial.

The elections in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh followed Mr. Rao's dismissal of their BJP administrations last December after Hindu zealots tore down a 16th

century mosque in the Uttar Pradesh town of Ayodhya.

That set off ferocious violence across much of the country in which more than 2,000 people died, most of them from the 120 million-strong Muslim minority in a largely Hindu nation of 890 million.

Mr. Rao accused the four BJP governments of failing to control the violence after the destruction of a mosque which became the symbol of the battle between Hindu nationalism and secularism.

A campaign against the mosque fuelled a dramatic surge of Hindu nationalism and seemed set to carry the BJP to national power and Congress into terminal decline.

Many Hindus believe the mosque stood on the birthplace of their god, Lord Rama, and supported the campaign to replace it with a temple.

But the Congress officials said the election results showed that without the mosque people had become bored with temple campaign and the BJP failed to come up with alternative issues.

"Emotional issues like Ayodhya have a limited life. In politics you have to have broader based issues," the BJP hasn't, said Mr. Bhatia.

In Uttar Pradesh, a two-party alliance which sought the votes of lower-caste Hindus and Muslims was set to win the most seats with the BJP, dominated by high-caste Brahmins and fuelled by anti-Muslim feelings, running second.

Trends showed no party would win a majority, but anti-BJP parties should keep the Hindu nationalists out of power in Uttar Pradesh, which has 85 of the national parliament's 545 seats, more than any other.

Congress fared badly in the state which was once its fiefdom, but says it will support an anti-BJP government.

Meanwhile, the Indian army has withdrawn from Sopore after swooping on the Kashmir Valley town in a major operation against separatist militants, witnesses said Sunday.

They said the army withdrew Saturday night. While there

was no official explanation for the pullout, army sources said the operation had achieved its limited purpose.

Sopore, northwest of Srinagar, summer capital of predominantly Hindu India's only Muslim-majority state, has been a militant stronghold and the centre of many attacks on security forces.

Residents said thousands of troops swept into the town of 100,000 people Friday night in trucks and armoured personnel carriers, meeting resistance from militants armed with automatic rifles and rocket-propelled grenades.

They gathered thousands of people in open spaces while informers, captured militants disguised with hoods and nicknamed "cats", picked out their former comrades.

An official spokesman said Sunday at least 15 people, mostly militants, had been killed and five soldiers and a paramilitary trooper had been wounded in the pre-dawn operation.

Militants said the toll was much higher. A spokesman for the Muslim fundamentalist Hezb-ul-Mujahideen, the strongest militant group in Sopore, alleged that more than 200 people had been killed and that most of the casualties were unarmed civilians.

Another militant group, Al-Burq, said 50 people had died. Official sources said up to 200 shops and houses were gutted in four places in Sopore Saturday. Reporters were not allowed into the town, centre of the valley's important apple industry.

Such "cordon and search" operations are widely used by the army in Kashmir, where police and hospitals have reported more than 13,000 deaths in a four-year-old revolt against Indian rule.

Paramilitary police are usually brought in to maintain security after such sweeps.

The army operation in Sopore followed the peaceful end this month of a four-week army siege of Srinagar's Hazratbal Mosque, Kashmir's most sacred Islamic shrine.



Miss Jamaica named Miss World 1993

SUN CITY, South Africa — Jamaica's Lisa Hanna, 18, (centre) was crowned Miss World 1993 in a glitzy ceremony at South Africa's Sun City gambling resort west of Pretoria Saturday.

The host country's Jacqui Mofokeng, 21, (left) came second and Sharmaine Gutierrez, 19, (right) of the Philippines came third. Ms. Hanna, a television presenter and karate student, won the title. She is the second black to represent her country in the contest. Some of the prizes worth a total of \$185,000 in the pageant which has found a new home at the casino centre in the nominally independent black homeland of Bophuthatswana. The Miss World judges, including singer Grace Jones, novelist Frederick For-

syth and actor Lou Gosset Jr., picked Miss Jamaica from among 81 contestants — including for the first time a representative of mainland China. Asked by the judges what her expectations were for South Africa's elections next year, Miss Mofokeng said: "I'm hopeful about South Africa because the people, black and white, are working towards unity and peace." She is the second black to represent her country in the contest. Some of the prizes worth a total of \$185,000 in the pageant which has found a new home at the casino centre in the nominally independent black homeland of Bophuthatswana. The Miss World judges, including singer Grace Jones, novelist Frederick For-

1st fuel for months heads for Sarajevo

SARAJEVO (R) — The first fuel convoy since August headed for the frozen and besieged city of Sarajevo Sunday, U.N. officials said.

The five tanker loads will allow clinics, bakery ovens and water pumps to function in a city where people have in the past been told to bring hospital generators if they want to have an operation.

Ray Wilkinson, spokesman in Sarajevo for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said another convoy carrying shelter material for 50,000 Muslims was heading for the blockaded eastern Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica.

The convoys were Saturday given permission to cross the border between Serbia and Bosnia after being held up by the Serbs Friday.

But a military supply convoy for a battalion of Nordic peacekeeping troops based near the northern Bosnian city of Tuzla was still being held up by the Serbs Sunday, a spokesman for the U.N. Protection Force said in Zagreb.

The U.N. has accused Serb and Croat commanders of obstructing relief convoys, preventing the movement of any aid in central Bosnia Saturday.

United Nations relief officials have pushed hard to bring winter aid to almost three million civilian victims of the war after Muslim, Serb and Croat political leaders agreed to stop harassing the convoys.

The U.N. military spokesman in Sarajevo, Colonel Bill Aikman, said problems with aid convoys were directly related to the resumption of peace talks between the warring sides in Geneva Monday and added: "Draw your own conclusions."

Bosnian Serb leader Rado-

van Karadzic has said he will not accept Muslim demands for more territory unless sanctions against Serbia for its support for Bosnian Serbs were lifted.

He said he would have no objection to the creation of a Muslim state in Bosnia but said Muslims must scale back their claims for more land.

European Community diplomats have suggested the gradual suspension of sanctions if the Serbs hand over more territory to the Muslims under a plan to divide Bosnia into three ethnic states.

Meanwhile, foreign ministers from the 12 states of the European Community meet in Geneva Monday to restart stalled Bosnian peace negotiations and try to avert a humanitarian catastrophe in Bosnia this winter.

Having last week endorsed a joint Franco-German policy proposal, the EC ministers come armed with a new stick-and-carrot strategy linking progress for peace with the gradual suspension of sanctions on rump Yugoslavia.

With the presidents of Serbia and Croatia beside their Bosnian proteges, the ministers will press the Bosnian leaders once more to guarantee safe passage to U.N. aid convoys.

They are also due to discuss the ethnic conflict in Serb-held areas of Croatia after secret negotiations last week between Croatian officials and the Krajina Serbs.

The nine-day meeting is the first initiative of the new European Union, which handles joint European Community foreign policy since the Nov. 1 implementation of the Maastricht Treaty.

But how much the EC ministers can achieve in a single day

before they jet off to a security summit in Rome is in question.

U.N. mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg, co-chairman of the Geneva talks with EC envoy Lord Owen, said last week he would be "very pleasantly surprised" if the Bosnians struck a deal in negotiations due to follow Monday's meeting.

Diplomats close to the Geneva conference have also been sceptical about the timing of the EC initiative — despite some encouraging signs in recent bilateral contacts, the mediators had not planned to bring the Bosnians together for some weeks.

Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic said Sunday that if the Bosnian Serbs do not make territorial concessions in the interests of peace then sanctions on Serbia should be tightened.

Mr. Izetbegovic was speaking at a news conference in Sarajevo before heading for a new round of Bosnian peace talks scheduled for Monday in Geneva.

Mr. Izetbegovic said: "If the Serb side does not return territories, sanctions should be tightened and not lifted."

He said sanctions should be imposed on Croatia if it does not stop its "interference" in Bosnia and if it does not grant a future Bosnian Muslim Republic access to the Adriatic at the seaside resort to Neum.

Meanwhile five people were killed and five others wounded when a shell landed in central Sarajevo Sunday, witnesses said.

The shell landed in front of Sarajevo University's School of Political Science, about 1.5 kilometres from the city centre, said a Reuters television crew which went to the site.

Major defends contacts with IRA

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister John Major, confronting calls to resign, Sunday defended secret peace contacts between his government and Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrillas who once tried to kill him.

"It would have been irresponsible for the prime minister to ignore the IRA coming to us and saying they wanted to end the war, and end the violence," a spokesman for Major told Reuters.

But the revelation Sunday that the government has had a conduit to the IRA for months if not years threatens to make or break the effort Mr. Major is engineering to end the 25-year-old civil conflict over British rule in Northern Ireland.

Hardline Protestant leaders in Northern Ireland called on Mr. Major and Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew to resign, saying they had repeatedly misled parliament with their insistence they would never negotiate with "terrorists."

"Sir Patrick has been found out to have been lying publicly and openly to the people of Northern Ireland," said Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the Democratic Unionist Party.

"There's only one thing Sir Patrick can do and that is to resign," he said. Mr. Major had also misled parliament, Mr. Robinson said. "He is therefore in exactly the same position..."

Exposure of contacts between the government and the IRA's political wing Sinn Fein confirms what many had long suspected, that London had to have a line into the IRA, despite its guerrilla war to unite the North with the Irish Republic.

It reinforces the worst fears of the hardline "unionist" leaders, committed to the 300-year-old union with Britain, that London is ready to sell them out in a deal with Republicans.

Mr. Major has been engaged in talks with all parties in the North and with Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds to try to seize what he sees as the best chance for peace in years.

The search has been given added urgency by the deaths in October of 27 people, killed by IRA bombers or Protestant death squads retaliating against Catholics for IRA attacks.

British government officials, however, insisted Sunday that the contacts with the IRA guerrillas were made at arms length and never at an official level.

They also sought to draw a distinction between contacts and negotiations, insisting nothing had been offered by Britain.

Mr. Major, they said, did not believe he had misled parliament. They pointed to his Nov. 18 statement that: "If they send such a message we are ready to listen to them, indeed it would be irresponsible not to."

What Mr. Major did not tell parliament at that time was that the approach had already been made by the IRA in February.

In responding to the IRA Mr. Major is dealing with a group which in 1991 launched a mortar attack on his Downing St. Office. In 1984 an IRA bomb devastated a Brighton Hotel hosting Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and most of her cabinet.

By Britain's account the IRA approached the government first saying it wanted to end its campaign against Britain.

Brother of Gandhi assassin unrepentant

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Gopal Vinayak Godse, a frail, soft-spoken septuagenarian, is facing arrest for defaming the man he helped murder 46 years ago. The victim was Mahatma Gandhi. Mr. Godse, who possesses perhaps India's most notorious surname, makes light of his possible arrest, putting it on the same plane as the slander and murder of one of modern history's most revered figures. The Hindu fanatic who fired the shots that killed Gandhi at Birla House here on Jan. 30, 1948 — five-and-a-half months after India's freedom and partition — was Nathuram Godse, his older brother.

Nathuram Godse and his associate Narayan Apte were executed on Nov. 15, 1949. Godse spent 17 years in prison after being convicted of conspiracy. "They cannot charge, prosecute and punish me for the same offence twice," the 74-year-old said during a visit here Friday. "I denounced him physically so many years ago and went to prison. This time I denounced him verbally."

"They will have to take me to court and I am sure to get bail. It may be that I will have to go to court a few times after that," he said in an interview at the offices of the Hindu Mahasabha, an extreme right-wing group. This month, Godse addressed public meetings in the western cities of Pune, Thane and Bombay where he denounced Gandhi as a traitor for endorsing the creation of Muslim Pakistan and lauded his assassin brother as a patriot. Bombay police Sunday charged Godse with "uttering words of disrespect" against Gandhi, who led the struggle for India's freedom from the British and is idolised by Indians as the "father of the nation." He is now writing a book on behalf of his brother titled Why I Assassinated Mahatma Gandhi.

Escaped British convict gives up

RENNES, France (AFP) — A British prisoner who fled the country in a rented light plane was to be handed over to British authorities Sunday after giving himself up to French police. Graham Jones, 37, crash-landed the plane Tuesday in fog at Saint-Marcoult, Sur-Mer on the channel coast, and spent the night at a hotel in nearby Cherbourg. Speaking no French and without any money, he hitch-hiked to Aubervilliers, on the outskirts of Paris, the next day and gave himself up at a police station there, police said. Jones rented the plane near Basingstoke, southern England, while on release from a prison in Surrey. He was jailed for four years a year ago for possessing a dangerous weapon with intent to endanger life.

Australia ready to punish overseas sex offenders

CANBERRA (AFP) — The Australian government has prepared legislation which would allow for prosecution of its citizens who sexually exploit children while overseas, a spokeswoman for Justice Minister Duncan Kerr said Sunday. The bill, originally scheduled for introduction to parliament in February, had already been drafted and would go to the lower house shortly before Christmas. The spokeswoman said it would be wrong to suggest the legislation was being rushed through parliament so it would be in force for the holiday season. The proposed legislation follows increasing concern about child-exploitation in Asian countries.

Judge shows pity once, but not again

SPRINGFIELD, Massachusetts (AFP) — Anthony Garafalo convinced a judge to give him a suspended sentence after he was shot and paralyzed during a theft, but got the book thrown at him after he robbed a bank in his wheelchair. Judge John Moriarty of Hampden Superior Court gave Mr. Garafalo, 33, a suspended sentence in 1990 when he pleaded guilty to a four-day robbery spree of two banks and a liquor store. The judge took pity on Mr. Garafalo because the owner of the liquor store shot him and left him paralysed. But on Tuesday, Garafalo was back before Judge Moriarty, in his wheelchair. This time, he was ordered to prison to serve a 15- to 25 year term because he violated his 15-year parole by allegedly robbing the Springfield branch of Northeast Savings on Sept. 28. An accomplice allegedly helped him park his wheelchair into a car and drove him away after the night up. Mr. Garafalo was arrested the following day when a police officer saw him in a cab.

N. Zealand finance minister dumped in reshuffle

WELLINGTON (R) — Ruth Richardson, the architect of radical economic reform in New Zealand since 1990, was dumped by Prime Minister Jim Bolger Sunday in a cabinet reshuffle aimed at producing a centrist government.

Ms. Richardson, a dry monetarist, was replaced in the key government job by Mr. Bolger's long-time friend and confidant, Bill Birch, a former Labour minister.

Financial markets were expected to react badly to the news when they open Monday. Market sources said the currency would fall and interest rates would rise in a reaction against the removal of Ms. Richardson, the darling of New Zealand's markets.

Mr. Bolger's 34-seat majority in parliament was slashed to just one in general elections on Nov. 6 and the 58-year-old Conservative prime minister had already indicated his new government would be pragmatic and seek consensus.

"We believe the time has come to recognise that the big move is behind us and a different style of management is called for," Mr. Bolger told a news conference.

"We are a party of the centre, not a party of the extreme right," Mr. Bolger said he had offered Ms. Richardson a senior role in cabinet but she had declined, preferring to work from the backbenches of parliament.

Khmer Rouge to end attacks, return zones

BANGKOK (AFP) — Cambodia's Khmer Rouge guerrillas offered Sunday to cease hostilities and give up all zones of control, including the gem-rich hills of Pailin in the west and the Preah Vihear Temple on the border with Thailand, in return for senior government positions.

The proposal, in a broadcast on Khmer Rouge Radio, was apparently a response to an offer by King Norodom Sihanouk, who reversed Monday an earlier vow not to include the Khmer Rouge in the elected government, and

Inkatha meets to plan strategy for elections

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) leadership met Sunday to weigh the merits of boycotting or contesting South Africa's first all-race election as war talks rumbled throughout the country.

Inkatha chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi said he would not lead his party "like lambs to the slaughter."

He told a rally Saturday he opposed running in the April 27 election if it is held under the interim constitution, drawn up by the government and other political parties to chart South Africa's transition to black majority rule.

Inkatha boycotted the constitution talks and has formed a "freedom alliance" of black conservatives and white extremists demanding a federal state with regional self-determination.

"The IFP's line is that we want Kwazulu/Natal to rule over itself. We want a federal constitution which will allow this to happen and we want it now and not after the election," Mr. Buthelezi said.

"I will not lead my party like a lamb to the slaughter, which will happen if we agree to fight the elections under the present constitution unless a miracle happens," he said.

The IFP Central Committee was meeting in his Kwazulu tribal homeland stronghold of Ulundi in Natal province.

Mr. Buthelezi told the rally he would seek guidance at the meeting on when to call a full conference to make a decision on election participation.

He said that unless the interim constitution was revised it could be torn up if the African National Congress, Inkatha's main black rival, won the election as is widely expected.

Army chiefs Saturday can-

celled weekend leave for some units after extremist leaders warned supporters to prepare for civil war.

White neo-Nazi leader Eugene Terre Blanche Thursday told his followers to arm their women for a war against blacks.

ANC leader Nelson Mandela predicted in response that thousands of innocent whites would be killed if the white right ignited a conflict.

Lucas Mangope, leader of the nominally independent black homeland Bophuthatswana, Saturday joined those warning of the danger of civil strife.

Mr. Mangope, a member of the Freedom Alliance, criticised the "suicidal haste" in agreeing the constitution.

"The regional governments will be toothless puppets whose strings will be pulled from the centre," he told a military parade.

President F. W. De Klerk and Mr. Mandela have stressed they want to reach a political accommodation with the IFP and white right wingers.

Meanwhile, South African police said they found the bodies of two men Sunday who had been shot dead in black township violence.

The corpses were found in Katshehong, east of Johannesburg, where the body of another shot man was found Saturday.

"Otherwise it's extremely quiet," said Lieutenant Deon Peens, police spokesman for the East Rand region where much of the township feuding in recent months has taken place.

More than 12,500 people have died in political violence since President F. W. De Klerk embarked on apartheid reforms in early 1991.

Taiwanese opposition leader resigns

TAIPEI (R) — The leader of Taiwan's main opposition party resigned Sunday to take responsibility for his party's stinging defeat in local government elections.

Hsu Hsin-Liang was replaced by veteran dissident Shih Ming-Tei as chairman of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which won six of the 23 county magistrate and mayoral posts at stake in Saturday's polls. It had previously

held seven posts. It was the first time since the DPP was founded in 1986 that the party, which wants Taiwan to abandon its official goal of eventual reunification with China, had seen its representation shrink in an election.

Previously, democratic reforms which began with the lifting of martial law in 1987 had allowed the DPP to make major gains in every election it fought.

Mr. Hsu attributed the DPP's failure to win its target of 11 posts Saturday to vote-buying by candidates of the ruling Nationalist Party, which won 15 posts, equal to the number it held before the polls.

He vowed the DPP would continue pushing for further democratic reforms such as the introduction of elections for Taiwan's president by direct popular vote.

Russia might clear up military anxieties at NATO

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Russia might clear up doubts about its post-cold war military doctrine to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) at a ministerial meeting here Friday, a NATO source said at the weekend.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, he said Moscow could take advantage of a meeting between NATO foreign ministers and counterparts from countries of the former Soviet Union to satisfy Western curiosity about the new doctrine.

The two sides will meet in the so-called North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). The following week, on Dec. 8 and 9, Russian President Boris Yeltsin is expected in the Belgian capital to sign a partnership agreement with the European Community and meet NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner.

Officials here are hoping that his visit will also serve to explain uncertainties and

ambiguities in Russia's military doctrine and its scepticism about strengthening links between NATO and countries of the former Soviet Bloc.

NATO officials have said that, based on press reports, the post-cold war Russian military stance contains "a lot of positive elements," is not aggressive and does not consider the U.S.-dominated NATO alliance as an enemy.

But they add that NATO wants clarifications, notably about Russia's policy towards Ukraine, Russian participation in international peacekeeping operations, and the possible use of Russian troops in the former Soviet republics.

There is also a question mark over Russia's abandonment of the old doctrine that Moscow would never resort to first use of nuclear weapons.

Russia has taken to making contradictory statements recently about its relations with NATO. Last August, Mr. Yeltsin appeared to give a

green light to Poland's request for membership of NATO.

Subsequently he withdrew this approval, saying that Russia would feel isolated if Poland and other Eastern European countries such as the Czech Republic and Hungary joined the Trans-Atlantic alliance.

A Yeltsin spokesman said Friday that Moscow viewed any eastward expansion of NATO as worrying, even if this included Russia itself.

Russian intelligence chief Yevgeny Primakov made critical comments at a press conference on Moscow Thursday about a U.S. initiative for a "partnership for peace" between NATO and its Eastern European neighbours including Russia.

He said NATO had always had the goal of "maintaining the strategic balance of force in Europe." "If this function is maintained, we cannot remain indifferent when we see NATO approaching our fron-

tiers," he said.

One NATO official responded: "NATO is not an aggressive alliance. The alliance is incapable of using its weapons in an aggressive way. You won't get consensus from its 16 member states for something aggressive."

He added that, in developing the "partnership for peace" initiative, "NATO is going to great lengths to accommodate legitimate Russian security interests, to not isolate Russia and to establish a strategic relationship with Russia."

The official maintained that NATO's bid to boost relations with Eastern Europe was aimed at increasing security in the region and was therefore in Russia's interest. He attributed Mr. Primakov's remarks to "internal reasons."

The "partnership for peace" initiative will be discussed at Friday's meeting. It would involve joint military exercises such as peace-keeping in combined joint task forces.

Legacy World keeps Japan Cup at home

TOKYO (R) — American Jockey Kent Desormeaux, riding 4-1 favourite Kotashan, was fined Sunday after mistaking the winning post as locally-trained Legacy World kept the Japan Cup at home again.

Ridden by Hiroshi Kawachi, Legacy World, an 11-1 chance, produced a fine burst of speed in the final 200 metres to beat Breeders' Cup Turf winner Kotashan by 1 1/4 lengths.

Third place also went to Japan in the form of Winning Ticket, the mount of Masato Shibata, while fourth-placed Platini, trained in Germany, performed best of the European riders in the 16-strong field.

After the glory of Santa Anita three weeks ago when Desormeaux partnered ex-French trained Kotashan to a \$2 million success in the Turf Race, it was sackcloth and ashes Sunday.

About 100 metres from the line and dazzled by the setting sun, the jockey briefly stood up in the saddle after staking a sign post for the finish line.

Realising the mistake, he went quickly back into action but it was too late and he failed to catch the winner.

Visibly shaken, Desormeaux later told reporters he might have won but for the error. "I could have won ... but I don't know ... I don't know ... I am just in a panic," he said. "I feel very ashamed. I made a big mistake ... I feel I cannot apologise enough to Kotashan's fans."

But, Kawachi on board Legacy World, felt he would have won anyway.

"I was a full length ahead of Kotashan when he made a mistake," he told a news conference. "So I don't feel I owe my triumph to his mistake."

Desormeaux was fined 50,000 yen (\$450) for the error which helped keep a Japan Cup jinx which has ensured no foreign top favourite has ever won the race.

Mejro Palmer, one of seven Japanese entries, made the running and the order stayed almost unchanged until they



Legacy World with Japanese Jockey Hiroshi Kawachi crosses the finish line of the Japan Cup horse race in Tokyo Sunday (AFP photo)

approached the final bend. Legacy World, who had raced in second place struck the front, and held on. Kotashan finished a head clear of Winning Ticket with 31-1 outsider Platini a neck away in fourth.

It was the second Japanese victory in the November classic in successive years.

In 1992 when Legacy World ran fourth, Tokai Tei-Oh won by a neck from Australia's Naturalism. The big antipodean hope was back again Sun-

day but this time finished a disappointing ninth.

The victory was worth 156 million yen (\$1.56 million) to Legacy World's Japanese owners, the Horse Tajima Company.

Globe-trotting French filly Urban Sea, winner of last month's Prix De La Reine De Triomphe at Longchamp, was a disappointment, starting at 14-1 and finishing eighth on ground that was probably too fast.

The only British runner, 11-

2 chance White Muzzle ridden by John Reid, trailed home in 13th place, despite the firm ground that was probably too fast.

The only British runner, 11-2 chance White Muzzle, ridden by John Reid, trailed home in 13th place, despite the firm ground which he enjoys.

Japan's top international event, the 2.4 km race attracted a record crowd of 180,000 — and record betting of 35.5 billion yen (\$321 million).

The only British runner, 11-

Schneider cruises to 45th World Cup skiing victory

SANTA CATERINA VAL-FURVA, Italy (R) — Veteran Vreni Schneider produced two faultless slalom runs Sunday to record the 45th World Cup win of her great career.

It was a belated birthday present for Schneider who was 29 Friday.

The Swiss was fastest on both legs on the Cevadale Piste to clock an overall time of 1:38.93, for a comfortable winning margin of 0.91 seconds over Austrian Anita Wachter.

The performance will nevertheless have delighted Wachter who has opened her defence of the overall World Cup crown with two wins and two second places.

Slovenian Urška Hrovat, aged only 19, took third place, 0.10 seconds behind Wachter to finish on the podium for the first time.

"I'm delighted to start the slalom season the same way I signed off last year — with a win," said Schneider.

"I had my first ever cup victory here in Santa Caterina in 1984 and this success brings that memory back," she added.

The Swiss, who wears a leather support to protect a herniated disc in her back, is the most successful woman skier on the World Cup circuit.

Her 45 wins — 24 in slalom, 20 in giant slalom and one in combination — leave her second in the World Cup Hall of fame.

Austrian great Annemarie Moser-Proll, who clocked up 62 victories between 1970-80, is the only woman ahead of her.

The Swiss suggested she would have a shot at the overall World Cup title she won in

1989 before Austrians Petra Kronberger and Wachter took over the show.

"I plan to ski the easier downhill and snper-Gs, especially those valid for the combined," she said.

Schneider believes that a new system whereby the combined is evaluated by simply adding times from two events together rather than on a complicated points basis could favour the slalom specialists. But it looks as if Wachter will take some stopping after the marvellous start she has made to the season.

The nimble Austrian garnered 260 points from the two giant slaloms and a slalom here over the past three days to add to the 100 for her giant slalom victory on a glacier at Sölden at the end of October.

"I'm less confident in the slalom than the giant so maybe I held back a little on the first run," said Wachter. But her second leg was good enough to lift her above the promising Hrovat into second place.

"Things really couldn't have gone better this weekend," said Wachter who has come into her own since triple World Cup winner Kronberger quit the sport last Christmas.

Wachter's 360 points put her 85 ahead of Schneider (275) in the overall standings with fellow Austrian Ulrike Maier third on 218.

Less happy was local favourite Deborah Compagnoni who failed to finish on the podium in any of the races in the village where she grew up.

The Olympic super-G champion, fourth in Saturday's slalom, failed to score any points Sunday after missing a gate early on her second run.

Mader beats Tomba in Alpine skiing

PARK CITY, Utah, (R) — Guenther Mader, the forgotten man of the Austrian ski team, beat Alberto Tomba of Italy by a razor-thin two-hundredths of a second Saturday for his first World Cup giant slalom victory in four years.

The 29-year-old veteran from Innsbruck had a total time of 2:00.61 for the two runs. Tomba clocked 2:00.63 and Kjetil Andre Aamodt of Norway was third in 2:00.73 to complete one of the closest World Cup results ever.

Frank Piccard of France, who won the season-opening giant slalom a month ago at Sölden, Austria, finished fourth in 2:00.85.

Remarkably, the four had the same order of finish after the first run, on which Mader led Tomba by three-hundredths.

Mader has been overshadowed on the Austrian team amid national excitement over a new wave of younger racers. His giant slalom performance last season was so shaky that he had fallen out of the first seed, starting 17th here, although low starting positions were no large handicap in a race run on hard snow that held up well.

With his victory over the racers who have been the world's best at this event in recent years — Tomba is the reigning Olympic champion in giant slalom and Aamodt won the World Championship last season — Mader will be forgotten no longer.

Mader won with a strong push on the flatter lower course, accelerating powerfully through the more open gates.

"I had good movement and gained more speed than the others," said Mader, who professed to take no special pleasure in beating Tomba.

"It's a nice feeling to win again. It doesn't matter who I beat."

Tomba was disappointed but circumspect about his narrow defeat.

"It was a good result for me," said Tomba, who pointed to the greater importance of the races that remain.

Chief among these are the winter games in February at Lillehammer where the flamboyant Italian hopes to win a gold medal for a third successful Olympics, an unprecedented feat.

"I think about the Olympics, but there are many races before then. I don't like to make predictions," Tomba said.

Aamodt, who was the dominant racer in the world when last season ended, now has finished third in two consecutive races.

"I am not disappointed because I am very close to winning," Aamodt said.

"I was too passive the first run and on the second, I had a couple of rough turns on the steep part. Otherwise I skied very well."

One of Aamodt's goals is to improve his results in slalom, the event scheduled for Sunday on the same course.

"It's still early. There are many races yet to go," he said.

Four racers who began outside the first seed scored top 10 finishes including Achim Vogt of Liechtenstein, who finished eighth from the 52nd start position, and Christian Mayer of Austria, who finished 10th after beginning in 43rd.

Taylor driven to brink of despair by England job

LONDON (R) — Graham Taylor admitted Sunday he was driven to the edge of despair before he finally quit as England's soccer manager last week.

Five days after his resignation, Taylor revealed the pressures of the job were so great, he had told his wife Rita: "Without you and the family I'd have been a suicide job by now."

He also said his wife had been spat at as public frustration mounted over England's poor World Cup qualifying results.

"When I told my wife the Football Association had accepted my resignation, she looked at me and said: 'I see it as six months' remission from a four-year jail sentence.'"

Speaking to the News of the World, Taylor said: "I've been emotionally drained and felt betrayed ... I've been betrayed by people in my profession and even by some of my friends."

"If I'd known what I do today, I wouldn't have taken the job ... I wouldn't have put myself and my family through all this."

Taylor said the worst moment came recently when a Leeds United "yob" jumped on his car and spat on the windscreen in front of his wife.

"Rita didn't say a word. She didn't have to. The look on her face said it all," said Taylor.

"It was a once in a lifetime chance. It was my ambition, by goal, something I desperately wanted to achieve in life, and now suddenly it's gone."

"I'm deeply hurt to the depths of my soul. Our failure to qualify and the personal anguish my family has suffered has left me emotionally drained."

"I went from being a respected and experienced manager at Aston Villa to an England manager without an ounce of credibility."

Eintracht, Bayern beaten in German first division

BONN (R) — Leaders Eintracht Frankfurt and powerful Bayern Munich slumped to painful defeats in the German soccer first division.

Eintracht were beaten 3-0 at home by Borussia Moenchengladbach and saw their lead at the top of the table shrink to just one point following victories by Kaiserslautern and Bayer Leverkusen.

Bayern Munich succumbed 3-1 at Freiburg, with Uwe Wassner notching a hat-trick for the newly promoted club.

In Frankfurt, Swedish international Martin Dahlin scored in the 15th and 39th minutes and Martin Maax added a third on the hour to Moenchengladbach an unexpected victory.

It was the third scoreless match in a row for Frankfurt but they clung to the Bundesliga lead on 24 points, with Kaiserslautern and Leverkusen one point behind.

Bayern, who would have overhauled Frankfurt on goal difference if they had won, were rocked by goals from Wassner in the fifth, 63rd and 83rd minutes.

Bruno Labbadia scored four minutes from time but was too little too late for the Bavarians, who are fourth.

Kaiserslautern scored a 3-0 home win over Cologne Friday, while Leverkusen beat fellow title challengers Duisburg 2-1 Saturday.

Leverkusen's win over Duisburg was their 19th consecutive

home match without defeat.

Ulf Kirsten opened the scoring in the 44th minute and Christian Wornas made it 2-0 in the 57th. Franz-Josef Steininger pulled one back for Duisburg in the 78th minute.

Frankfurt coach Klaus Toppmoller said he was sorry missing injured Ghanaian striker Anthony Yeboah.

"We had so many ambitions today but we did not come out fighting and Moenchengladbach were able to slip through with counter-attacks," Toppmoller said. "They deserved to win."

Munich coach Erich Ribbeck also complained about lack of concentration in the Bavarian debacle.

"It was unnecessary to give away two points," Ribbeck said. "Freiburg made good use of their counter-attacks."

Russian international Sergei Kiriaikov scored a first-half hat-trick to secure a remarkable 3-3 draw for Karlsruhe against Borussia Dortmund who had led 3-0 inside 19 minutes.

Gerhard Poscher gave visitors Dortmund a great start with a goal in the third minute and Swiss striker Stephane Chapuisat added two more in the 15th and 19th minutes.

Kiriaikov struck back in the 26th, 43rd and 45th minutes to level the scores but after the six-goal excitement of the first half there were no more goals after the interval.

Leverkusen's win over Duisburg was their 19th consecutive

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♠ 8 4
♥ 6 3
♦ Q 10 5 2
♣ 7 6 5 2

SOUTH

♠ Q 10 2
♥ A Q J 8 5
♦ 7 6
♣ 10 8 3

The bidding:

West North East South

1 ♠ 1 NT Pass 3 ♠

Pass 4 ♠ Pass Pass

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Police patrol gets new headquarters

AMMAN (Petra) — The Public Security Department (PSD) Sunday opened the new premises of the police patrol headquarters on the outskirts of Sweileh-west of Amman. The JD 460,000 complex is made up of three buildings with a total area of 2,898 square metres. An inauguration ceremony was held at the site attended by Major General Abdul Rahman Al Udwan, the PSD director, and senior police officers. Gen. Udwan toured the new premises and was briefed on the work of each building. The project was executed on a plot of land next to the old police patrol headquarters.

PLO negotiator boycotting talks

TEL AVIV (R) — A senior Palestinian negotiator suspended his participation in talks with Israel on confidence-building measures, accusing it Sunday of holding up further releases of Palestinian prisoners. Israel freed hundreds of low-risk inmates after it signed an accord with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in September on limited Palestinian self-rule, but a spate of Arab killings of Jews kept prison gates shut. "I have decided to suspend my participation in the talks... because (I am) very upset and angry with the Israeli position, with their way of dealing with the prisoner issue," Ziad Abu Ziad told a news conference in Arab East Jerusalem. Mr. Abu Ziad heads the Palestinian subcommittee discussing with Israel ways to build confidence between the Jewish state and the PLO and ensure the success of the landmark peace pact. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has rejected Palestinian calls for a written Israeli promise to free thousands of prisoners as a condition for progress in the sluggish autonomy talks.

PLA fighters in Iraq prepare to leave

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Some 1,500 Palestinian fighters based in Iraq are preparing to join the Palestinian police force being set up in the Israeli-occupied territories, the PLO's Baghdad representative, Azzam Al Ahmad, said Sunday. The fighters, members of the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), were due to have travelled to Jordan in the past few days, but were delayed because of problems which emerged at the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in Cairo, Mr. Ahmad said. The group included 25 officers currently undergoing four days of training in humanitarian police work in Baghdad with a Red Cross representative, Michel Ducraux, the Palestinian official said. There were around 3,000 PLA soldiers in Iraq, he added.

Sudan accuses rebels of attacking train

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan's government accused the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) Sunday of attacking a train taking relief aid to the needy in war-torn southern Sudan. The government-owned newspaper Al Sudan Al Hadith (Modern Sudan) said the attack took place last week in an area to the west of Fankaj and Kongor. The paper quoted Mohammed Ahmad Al Gabboush, assistant commissioner of relief, as saying the train was on its way to Waw, the capital of Bahr al Ghazal state, when it came under attack. He did not say exactly where the attack took place. Mr. Gabboush said the attackers robbed more than 150 tonnes of sorghum, Sudan's staple food, 55 tonnes of vegetable oil and 300 sacks of lentils and other food items from the train.

Cabinet in E. German state resigns

MAGDEBURG, Germany (R) — The premier in the east German state of Saxony-Anhalt, Werner Muech, said Sunday he and his cabinet were resigning for their role in the scandal over payments to west German politicians in the east. Mr. Muech, of the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU), told a news conference after a crisis meeting Sunday that the government, made up of CDU and Liberal Free Democrats (FDP), would stay in office until new elections can be held. After reunification three years ago, many politicians left West Germany to help rebuild impoverished former communist East Germany. The state audit office complained that some East German politicians who came to Saxony-Anhalt gave themselves higher salaries than allowed, robbing the state of 900,000 marks (\$530,000). Mr. Muech told the news conference that neither he nor the other ministers resigning had received "at any time illegal payments." But he said that the public atmosphere had become so poisoned by revelations in the libelous accusations.

Sex-related AIDS cases rise in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Blood transfusions are no longer the main source of AIDS in Iran and most HIV-positive patients caught the virus through sexual intercourse, a senior health official said Sunday. Deputy Health Minister Hussein Makle Afzali said 60 per cent of the people who caught AIDS in 1992 were exposed to the virus through sexual intercourse. He said 269 people were known to have caught the disease in Iran, of whom 62 people had died and 85 had developed full-blown AIDS. However, the number of Iranians infected with the virus could be as high as 5,000 nationwide, Mr. Afzali said. Although the subject of sex is considered taboo in Iran the government has stepped up a campaign to prevent the spread of the disease. The authorities launched an AIDS awareness campaign two years ago and the use of condoms is allowed, although sex before marriage is forbidden.

Iran says Gulf dispute is 'fake crisis'

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's foreign minister has called a dispute with the UAE over three Gulf islands a "fake crisis" and said the third party was trying to create tension over the issue. The official Iranian news agency late on Saturday quoted Ali Akbar Velayati as saying many attempts had been made to disturb agreements made between the UAE and Iran over the islands. IRNA said he was speaking to the Lebanese Al Safir daily. "If the situation becomes critical in the Persian Gulf, it won't harm Iran alone. So fanning the tension will benefit no one," the agency reported Mr. Velayati as saying. Mr. Velayati did not specify who the third party was.

Religious Jews criticise scroll hunt

TEL AVIV (AP) — Fresh from complaints that a last-minute search for Dead Sea scrolls undermines the peace process, Israel's "Operation Scroll" now faces opposition from a different quarter: ultra-religious Jews. Several hundred demonstrators stoned cars and burned trash in Jerusalem's religious Mea Shearim neighbourhood on Saturday night to protest what it alleges is the unearthing of Jewish graves — and one organiser promised more.

Peres urges Albania to follow Israeli model

TIRANA (R) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres arrived Sunday for the first visit by an Israeli minister to Albania and recommended the Balkan state should take the same route as his country on its way to democracy, an Albanian spokesman said. "He stressed that the size of the country, its territory and population are not as important as the quality of the managers, of the people who direct the state, the politics and economics, and he offered to help in this aspect," Albanian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramazan Hysa said.

OIC asks world to preserve Jerusalem

DUBAI (R) — The 51-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) appealed to the world Sunday to preserve the Arab-Islamic character of Jerusalem. "The OIC appeals to the international community to exert pressure on Israel to ... respect the status of Al Quds and the place it occupies in the hearts of Muslims," the Jeddah-based OIC said in a statement.

No peace for the Gaza slumdwellers

By Barry Parker
Agence France Presse

GAZA CITY, Occupied Gaza Strip — When Israel and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) sealed their historic autonomy deal, Mohammad Abu Amra believed that life might improve at last for his wife and 10 sons. But five days before the agreement was signed on Sept. 13, soldiers arrived with a bulldozer and knocked down his shack along with seven others in one of the scores of Gaza City slums.

"We have been here for three years. Why are they doing this now?" asked the unemployed 35-year-old, casting his hand over a wretched collection of huts put up illegally on what is known as "state land."

Mr. Amra straightened twisted corrugated iron sheets and rebuilt his home. "Then they came back on Oct. 6 and smashed everything again."

"They told us we had to get a certificate of homelessness, which we did. But the bulldozer came back again on Nov. 6 and flattened the place."

A bulldozer came to the brick home of 45-year-old Jammir Qais on the Gaza City seashore on Nov. 17.

"The soldiers told my wife they had to destroy our house."

She ran to the neighbours, but five minutes later when she came back it was gone," said the lorry driver.

He just cannot understand why, with the Dec. 13 deadline for the start of the Israeli army's pullout from Gaza fast approaching.

Nor can dozens of other families who have suffered the same fate. Now Mr. Qais, his wife and four children live under plastic sheeting and a U.N. tent, sifting the rubble for their belongings.

According to the Gaza Centre for Rights and Law, 20 shacks, most housing the poorest of the poor, were bulldozed in the city on Nov. 17 alone.

It is a routine event throughout the strip where thousands eke out an impoverished existence in rusting illegal shanties on "state land."

It was also on Nov. 17 that the army demolition squad visited a sprawling slum in dunes beside a new building development outside Gaza Strip.

"This is just revenge," said Tawze Al Hawari. "We have nothing and they destroy even that."

"Some soldiers opened fire inside the huts and one said, 'ask Hamas to build shelter for you'."

The crux of the problem is



A Palestinian resident of the Jabaliya refugee camp passes burning tires set on fire Sunday, next to the residence of a Hamas military leader in a protest against his killing by Israeli forces Wednesday (AFP photo)

the use by the Israeli military of "state land" — about 40 per cent of the Gaza Strip, said Razi Sourani, director of the Gaza rights centre.

"State land should be used for good of the community, for the people of Gaza who need it, not for settlers," the lawyer argued.

After a court battle led by the centre, the army has frozen the scheduled demolition of 234 houses on "state land" at the village of Beit Lahia.

Many of the families have lived there since 1948.

Mr. Sourani recognises that many Palestinians have moved

onto "state land" to avoid payment. However, he adds: "They are very poor and lead a miserable life in the most basic conditions."

The army knocks the shanties down, but does not force the people off the land and so they rebuild, often only to see their homes demolished again.

"There is no point to the whole process," Mr. Sourani said.

The military administration claims to keep no records of the number of demolitions it carries out and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians has no jurisdiction

outside the refugee camps. "You can't just build anywhere in Gaza," the administration's spokeswoman said.

"These people have been told a long time ago and they are given time to remove their things. Anyway they are not proper houses just shacks."

"Why should we stop doing this part of our job when we are still investing money in schools and roads for the Palestinians?" she asked.

"Aod do you think that when the Palestinians take over they will allow people to start building anywhere on land they don't own?"

Electricity back in Kabul

KABUL (AFP) — Electricity was restored to parts of Kabul Friday and Saturday after a 30-day stoppage due to factional fighting around the hydroelectric dams located to the east of the capital.

Forces loyal to Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar allegedly cut the power to the capital in protest over the use of government fighter jets against not only their military positions, but also civilian areas under their control.

"A delegation of three neutral ministers visited the prime minister at his Charasiab headquarters Thursday to ask for the power to be restored," Khonja Abdul Ghafar, deputy director of the Kabul electricity department, said Saturday. Mr. Hekmatyar agreed, and Kabul received two hours of power Thursday night as a test. Mr. Abdul Ghafar said, adding that Friday it came on at about 6:00 p.m. (1330 GMT), but only lasted five hours.

Mr. Abdul Ghafar said the line was cut by Kalashnikov rifle fire at 10:30 p.m. (1800 GMT) Friday by some of Mr. Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami guerrillas based near Hukhail, about eight kilometres east of Kabul.

The line was repaired early Saturday and the electricity stayed on until the mid-afternoon.

Mr. Abdul Ghafar said that in the past Hukhail residents had been responsible for cutting and looting sections of the overhead electricity cables, which they can sell in neighbouring Pakistan for \$2.30 a metre.

He said that power had been restored by the simple throwing of a switch, and that no lines had been damaged in the fighting between Hezb-e-Islami and President Burhanuddin Rabbani's Defence Ministry troops.

Mr. Abdul Ghafar said that of the three hydroelectric dams located near the town of Sarobi, some 70 kilometres east of Kabul, only one, called Naghlu, was currently supplying Kabul with power.

Somali meeting to open without warlords

ADDIS ABABA (Agencies) — Two warlords with the power to scuttle the U.N. mission in Somalia will stay away from an international conference on how to make the country safe again for relief operations.

Mohammad Farah Aided, the Mogadishu faction chief whose fighters had U.N. troops on the run, said he would not attend the meeting opening in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa on Monday.

Aided spokesman Abdi Abshir Kahiye said in Mogadishu on Sunday General Aided would send delegates to Ethiopia but they would not sit at tables with the U.N. officials.

Gen. Aided will not attend in person while the U.N. peacekeeping force still detains eight of his followers, the spokesman said.

Ali Mahdi Mohammad, a rival of Gen. Aided, said he would not attend but would send representatives.

Mr. Ali Mahdi is furious that the United Nations called off a manhunt for Gen. Aided last month after more than 70 peacekeepers and hundreds of Somalis were killed in an undeclared war.

Anticipating such difficulties, officials organising the three-day conference have billed it as the last chance for peace.

"The message from the U.N. is clear. This is the last chance Somalis have to make peace and move on with rehabilitation of their country," one U.N. official told Reuters.

Some 90 delegates from Somalia's 18 regions are expected to attend the fourth such U.N. conference.

The special representative of U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to Somalia, Admiral Jonathan Howe, left Mogadishu Sunday for Addis Ababa to attend the conference, a U.N. spokesman said.

The meeting will be chaired by the U.N. under secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, Jan Eliasson.

"I am confident about the conference but I definitely do not underestimate difficulties that lie ahead," he said.

Mr. Eliasson said the conference would focus on immediate emergency needs, relief and rehabilitation. These could not be achieved without security guarantees from Somali factions, he said.

"The basic idea about this conference is dialogue, donors want assurances of security in Somalia, this is the message being sent to Somalis," he added.

Without some promise of peace among faction leaders, donor nations could write off Somalia and shift resources to countries more capable of helping themselves, U.N. officials and international relief workers have said.

Also boycotting the session is the Republic of Somaliland, a breakaway area in the north, where leaders announced their secession two years ago.

The republic's cabinet said in a statement received Sunday that it objects to the United Nations' refusal to recognise Somaliland. Although not recognised by any other government, it is the only major region of Somalia with a working, if still fragile, government.

Iraq sceptical over sanctions end

(Continued from page 1)
weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

The head of the U.N. commission responsible for scrapping Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, Rolf Ekeus, said Friday that Baghdad's acceptance of monitoring demonstrated that the system of sanctions and embargoes imposed upon Iraq by the U.N. had worked.

Mr. Ekeus also said he believes it will take six months before it is determined that a system of monitoring and verification is working.

Only then would Iraq be allowed to export oil. Iraq has asked that it be permitted to sell oil immediately.

The United States U.N. mission, which would have a veto over any lifting of sanctions, said Iraq must demonstrate over a sustained period of time it is cooperating with the monitoring programme.

"Iraq maintains it has fulfilled all the conditions laid down in 1987 for the scrapping of its weapons of mass destruction and is therefore entitled, under paragraph 22 of that resolution, to have the sanctions barring oil exports lifted."

Efforts to free U.S. diplomat face problems

SANAA (Agencies) — Efforts to free a U.S. diplomat kidnapped by a tribal chief in Yemen have run into difficulties over his captors' demands for payments from the government and a U.S. oil company, a source close to negotiations said Sunday.

Haynes Mahoney, director of the U.S. Information Service (USIS) in the capital Sanaa, was being treated well, a tribal source told Reuters.

Mr. Mahoney was seized by five gunmen on Thursday evening who took him to the Marib desert area about 120 kilometres east of Sanaa.

Political sources said the chief holding him was Mubarak Saleh Al Mashan, an ex-army officer and former leader of a pro-Islam political group.

The mediation effort was entangled in difficulties over Sheikh Mashan's financial claims against the government and the U.S. oil company

Hunt.

"Mahoney could be released either late Sunday or Monday if the financial problems were solved," the tribal source said.

Sheikh Mashan wants Hunt, the main operator in Yemen's modest oil industry, to pay for its pipelines and a pumping station on the tribe's lands, the source said.

Hunt has a history of problems with local people. The tribes accuse the company of failing to pay \$120,000 a year to improve services in the area and had at one stage stopped its operations.

Sheikh Mashan also demands the government develop the area, which lacks proper roads, running water and enough schools.

The government has moved troops to the area as officials negotiate to secure Mr. Mahoney's release.

In May, two American engineers working for Hunt were

held hostage for five days by a tribe from the Marib region, the Daham, over a criminal case.

The parliamentary speaker has joined senior government officials in the bid to secure the release of the diplomat, sources close to the speaker told AFP.

Sheikh Abdullah Al Ahmar, the leader of the powerful Hashed tribe, is taking part in the mediation efforts.

Sheikh Ahmar, noted for his influence and power in a country notorious for its tribal structure, is mediating with Sheikh Mashan in the Marib district community of Jihm, 70 kilometres east of the capital.

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh is also trying to secure the release of Mr. Mahoney, who is in his forties, and on Friday sent a delegation of tribal leaders to the Marib district to negotiate with the

kidnappers.

"We have nothing new about him. We continue to cooperate with local authorities," a U.S. embassy source said.

"The situation hasn't changed and security forces continue to surround the area where Mahoney is being held," a Yemeni member of parliament from the Marib region told AFP.

The interior ministry had said that "a definite plan to save the diplomat" had been devised in the event that mediation efforts failed.

Mr. Mahoney, who studied Arabic in Egypt in 1991, also served in Damascus in the 1980s and his wife is an Armenian from Syria.

His abduction was the first of a Western diplomat in the country since North and South Yemen were united in May 1990.

French boys killed to help tramps, experts say

PARIS (R) — One of three French boys aged between eight and 10 accused of hawking a tramp to death said on Sunday he was not sure why he did it but thought as he struck out "I'm being naughty."

Asked by the weekly Journal du Dimanche what he thought now, the thin 10-year-old, wearing red pyjamas and large round spectacles, replied: "I don't know. Soon it'll be Christmas. I'm getting a bike and a stereo."

The boy, named only as T, smiled, as did his mother.

Chilling details of the Oct. 29 murder in a southern Paris suburb emerged only this weekend although the three were placed under investigation three weeks ago.

Magistrates, wary of the publicity surrounding the Liverpool trial of two English schoolboys for the murder of tiny James Bulger, kept the case under wraps.

French psychiatrists and criminal experts believe that while comparisons can be

drawn between the two murders, the differences are enormous, as is the system of justice.

The children are said to have huddled the tramp with a wooden beam and dragged his body to a shallow well where police later found his corpse.

The boys, one aged eight and the other two 10, have been released into the custody of their parents pending judicial proceedings while two other tramps present during the attack are also under investigation.

According to accounts by both T and one of the tramps, a group of boys in the suburb of Vitry made friends in October with two vagrant men, aged 37 and 47, who moved into a shed on a vacant lot where the boys often played. The children regularly brought them food.

Trouble began when a third vagrant, 45-year-old Pierre Boura, described as an ailing alcoholic, attempted to move into the shed against the wishes

of the other two. On Oct. 29, Boura bragged he had tried to set the shed alight the previous day, infuriating one of the vagrants, who started to beat him up in front of the boys.

The man, identified as Jean-Marc, told Europe-1 radio that after he punched him, the children joined in. "I told them to stop and they did for five minutes. Then they came back and dragged him into a bush. I don't know what happened next."

I said the beaten tramp was bleeding when the three boys joined the fray. "Jean-Marc told us to hit him, so we did... he was still moving and we continued. I don't really know why."

Asked by the paper: "Did you have the impression you were doing something bad?" the boy replied with a vague smile: "Yes. I said to myself this is not right. I'm being naughty."

After dragging the man's body to a well, they covered

him up with planks of wood. Police, tipped off by a fourth child who looked on horrified, found the corpse the next day.

The other vagrant was said to have looked on and is facing charges of failing to render assistance to a person in danger.

The boys, and the tramp known as Jean-Marc, have been placed under investigation for battering and inflicting blows which unintentionally caused death.

Children's judge Anne-Marie Vignaud said that under French law, children under 13 facing criminal proceedings could not be placed in detention. "They can be released to parents, if judges deem the family environment to be favourable or, if not, placed in a special institution or with another foster family."

T's confession is expected to raise many of the same questions haunting Britain since Bulger's murder.

Two of the boys, including T, are from broken homes. T's

mother told the weekly the child had been beaten by her former companion. "He always saw me being battered. Maybe that was why he did not respond when he was asked to hit."

However, child psychiatrists said in media interviews that the case could not be compared to Bulger's because the boys acted in the presence of adults, and possibly under their influence.

"They did not intend to kill," said court psychiatrist Yves Roumajon. "They were trying to help their friends. It was almost a gesture of solidarity."

Child psychiatrist Paul Messerschmidt said on television that violent films and video were certainly to blame.

I did not tell his mother what he had done when he went home. "I watched TV. I like action movies and films that scare me. My favourite heroes are Bruce Lee, Jean-Claude van Damme and Rocky."

COLUMN

Charles harmed Britons in Iraq

LONDON (AFP) — Two British newspapers commented on the role of Prince Charles Sunday, with one saying he had harmed British interests in Iraq by attacking Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and the other that he had helped to restore recently strained British-Iraqi relations. According to the Sunday Telegraph, Foreign Office officials said that Prince Charles's virulent attacks against the Iraqi leader in a speech last month jeopardised the early release of three Britons held in Iraq. In that speech, the Prince of Wales described "the unenviable horrors" carried out by the Iraqi regime and the "obscene lies" used to justify them. He has been a favourite target of the Iraqi press ever since. An official Foreign Office spokesman denied any link between the prince's speech and the release of the three British prisoners: Paul Rida, Michael Wainwright and Simon Dunn, who are serving prison terms of seven, 10 and eight years, respectively, for "illegally entering Iraq." "What Prince Charles said in his speech is in no way related to those men," the spokesman said. "Their sentence is grotesque and they should be released immediately." The Independent On Sunday said the Prince of Wales had "acted as a secret intermediary" between Chancellor Helmut Kohl and British Prime Minister John Major "during the wave of anti-German feelings in Britain earlier this year." Last March "the prince spent an hour with the chancellor discussing how to calm the anger that had arisen in Britain following the collapse of sterling on black Wednesday," for which he received "a warm letter of thanks and congratulations" from Mr. Major, the paper said, quoting one of the prince's "confidants."

'Diana wants reconciliation'

LONDON (AP) — A gossip columnist said Saturday that Princess Diana wants a reconciliation but Prince Charles has promised Camilla Parker Bowles he will marry her one day. As the first anniversary of the royal separation approached, columnist Nigel Dempster said Princess Diana had wanted a divorce and remarriage, but has changed her mind. "She wants a reconciliation," he said, "under the same roof, it is said." Dempster said on the television programme Who's Who, without indicating his source. "Only then does she believe that the future of the monarchy is safe," Dempster said breathlessly. "The queen and Prince Philip are desperate for Prince Charles and Princess Diana to be reconciled." For the sake of the monarchy and the young Princes William and Harry, he added. Dempster said Queen Elizabeth II has invited Princess Diana to the royal estate at Sandringham in eastern England for Christmas — "a family gathering with her boys and the husband who only a year ago she was desperate to get rid of and divorce." "Charles has long promised Camilla Parker Bowles, his long-time confidante... that he will one day marry her," said Dempster, who writes a gossip column for the tabloid Daily Mail. "If she accepts, and we won't know until the week before Christmas, we can almost guarantee that a reconciliation is on the cards," Dempster asserted. Mrs. Parker Bowles, 46, is the wife of Charles' friend army Brig. Andrew Parker Bowles. She was Charles' girlfriend when they both were single. They kept up a close friendship and were the subject of widely published gossip for months.

Bush hits the lecture circuit

HOUSTON (AP) — After nearly a year of self-imposed exile, former President George Bush is hitting the public speaking circuit. In recent months, Mr. Bush has shown up in Dallas, dispensing his reflective perspectives to hotel executives. He's also been to Florida, playing tennis with retired por Chris Evert. And he went to Puerto Rico to raise money for his presidential library at Texas A and M University. George Bush's words and White House witticisms aren't cheap for groups looking for a toastmaster. His pig before Amway Distributors in September cost a cool \$100,000, about half of what he earned annually as president.

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